american socialist monthly

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october 1936

vol. 5 no. 7

25 cents

First Issue - Out November !

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MARXIST QUARTERLY — 20 Vesey Street — New York City

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by

HAIM KANTOROVITCH

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Special Publication of the

AMERICAN SOCIALIST MONTHLY, 21 East 17th St., New York

The death of Comrade Kantorovitch having occurred at the time of issue of the September number, it was decided to defer publication and to combine it with the October number. The present issue is the combined September - October number and includes Nos. 7 and 8.

american socialist monthly

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October, 1936

Vol. 5 No. 7

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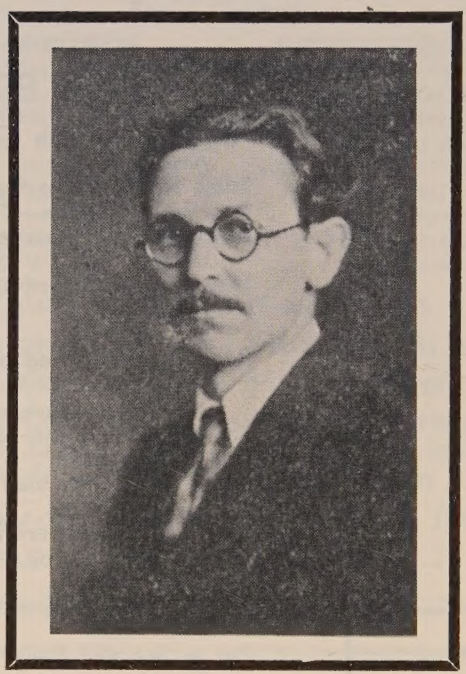
Official theoretical organ of the Socialist Party of the U. S. of America

Published monthly at 21 East 17th Street, New York by the American Socialist Monthly

Subscription One Dollar and Fifty Cents a Year

Entered as second class matter, November 8th, 1934, at the post office at New York, New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Haim Kantorovitch



November 4, 1890—August 18, 1936

THE RADICAL movement can ill afford to lose a single member in its ranks. Every rank and file member is important in the conduct of the class struggle. When, however, a movement loses one of its outstanding leaders, that loss is important. Great as the loss may be at the moment of his passing, the loss of a theoretical leader becomes more and more evident as time goes on.

Haim Kantorovitch believed that no one was indispensable to a movement. In this he was, however, only partly correct. Social movements have their own course; they flow on. But, there are drifts, there are diversions of courses; there are impediments. Little as the socialist movement could afford to spare him at any time, the less could it afford do so now, with the betrayal of Socialism on the part of the Old Guard, with the all too sad lessons to be drawn from the recent defeats of the German and Austrian working class movement, with the desperate struggle of our comrades in Spain, and with the French workers holding on grimly to power but with a weak and vacillating policy. Now, as never before in the history of the working class movement, clarity of thought, correct analyses, decisiveness of purpose, and vigorous defense of a Marxian position is necessary.

As no one else in the movement, Haim Kantorovitch embodied all the attributes that make for great leadership, but one—health.

Born in a small village in Lithuania, Haim Kantorovitch came to the United States at the age of seventeen. He had already had contacts with the Bund, a revolutionary Marxian organization of Russia. He had read what little revolutionary literature could penetrate to his small community. Like most immigrants of that particular period, he suffered dire privation, he knew the congested life of the West End of Boston, the wretchedness of the sweatshop, which threw him at once into the class struggle. He helped organize his factory into a union which affiliated with the IWW. After the IWW union had disintegrated, he reorganized the union when the ILGWU put on an organization drive.

At the same time he began his first efforts in the literary field, a number of his

articles and poems having been accepted by a Yiddish publication in London.

Coming to New York, he haunted the Public Library and there, by chance, first came upon Plekhanov, whom he found intoxicating. Having a philosophic mind, he devoured everything of Plekhanov's on which he could lay his hands. Plekhanov naturally led to Marx and Engels, to Feuerbach, to Kant, to Hegel, and to all of the philosophers, to all of the writers on the subject of socialism, anarchism, syndicalism, to the social sciences in general; to the labor and trade union movement. His reading and store of knowledge was prodigious.

But, not only did he read. He applied what he read. He was not a living encyclopedia. Knowledge, for the mere sake of knowledge, was decadence with him. Knowledge had value because of its application to the working class movement.

Having been a Yiddishist, his medium, for many years was Yiddish, although he read and wrote fluently Russian, German and English, reading everything he could, in the original. He became a member of the Poale-Zion movement. During that period, after having contributed to numerous magazines, he wrote two books. One "The History of the Labor Movement in America," the other "In the Light of Marxism," outstanding books in their field.

More a Marxist than a Labor Zionist, he realized that Zionists were primarily interested first, in Palestine and only secondarily, in Socialism. He left the Poale-Zion movement and joined the Socialist Party about ten years ago. At the time he had for several years been teaching in the Workmen's Circle schools of Baltimore, Waterbury, Newark and New York. While in Baltimore he delivered his first English lecture, *The Rise and Decline of Neo-Communism,* which later was published as his first English article, in the "Modern Quarterly." The article, one of the first critical analyses of Communism and the Russian Revolution, created a tremendous sensation and was later reprinted as a special pamphlet (now out of print).

On the invitation of V. F. Calverton, editor of the "Modern Quarterly," he became one of the associate editors of the "Modern Quarterly" and contributed valuable articles giving Marxian analyses of the philosophy of John Dewey, in his article "A Revolutionary Interpretation of Philosophy;" of the science of Bertrand Russell, in his article "Historical Materialism and the New Science," "A Modern Analysis of Historical Theory." When the "Modern Quarterly" departed from what Comrade Kantorovitch thought was a correct Marxian emphasis, he severed his connection with that publication.

Coming to New York to take charge of the High School of the Workmen's Circle, he wrote frequently for the "Wecker," official publication of the Jewish Socialist Federation, which he later edited, and with which eventually he broke, again as a matter of principle, when the fight with the Old Guard began. Where it was a question of principle, he never faltered. During this period he toured the country for the Workmen's Circle Educational Department, then under the direction of Philip Geliebter, having been among the few speakers in greatest demand. He was also director of the Children's Camp of the Workmen's Circle, as well as a member of the Executive Committee and of the Educational Committee of the Workmen's Circle.

Revered, respected, esteemed for his keen insight, his penetrating mind, his

crystal clear method of exposition, his keen, incisive pen, his individual style, he was beloved by all of the young folks with whom he came into contact and whose mentor he was. It was sufficient for a child, or a grown person, to have him as a teacher, to become a devoted disciple of his.

Having devoted himself only to the Yiddish part of the movement, it is just about five years ago that the writer and David P. Berenberg, both then associated with the Rand School, felt the need for a left-wing, Marxian theoretical magazine in the socialist movement, a publication that could speak out clearly and vigorously, without equivocation. There had been no magazine in the socialist movement for more than ten years. Casting about for at least one other comrade, they approached Haim Kantorovitch, known to them then only through his English articles in the "Modern Quarterly." He responded with alacrity. He too had looked forward to the establishment of such a publication. It had been his dream, his hope.

With unanimity of agreement and purpose, a bond and friendship was cemented, strong from its very inception and the "American Socialist Quarterly" was launched in January 1931. The magazine was a labor of love. The work was entirely voluntary. This was his introduction to the English reading members of the Socialist Party. His articles became a force in the publication, and left wing sentiment in the party began to crystalize as a result of his challenging and provocative writing.

At first his articles were devoted primarily to philosophical aspects of Marxism. Soon, however, world and domestic problems in the socialist movement impelled him to lay aside, for a while, the purely theoretical problems in order to analyze, critically, events on the political and economic scene. His articles on the "German Tragedy," "Towards Socialist Reorientation" showed up with almost X-Ray clarity his keen perception of the situation, proving, all too unfortunately for the German workers, their mistakes which proved so costly to the workers of the world. Their costly policy he traced back very definitely to a perversion of true Marxian revolutionary concepts, and lack of proper education and propaganda. He claimed that the German workers were not trained to be revolutionary workers prepared to meet a revolutionary situation.

But, he was never discouraged; better to start almost anew than carry along heritages that were only fetters.

A few weeks after publication of the first issue of the "American Socialist Quarterly" he became ill, the treacherous disease which took its toll four and a half years later, having developed. He had also, just at that time started a series of lectures at the Rand School on the "Philosophy of Marxism," the first English lectures after his original lecture on "The Rise and Decline of Neo-Communism." His delivery, his vocabulary, his force, his rapier-like anlaysis galvanized his class. All too soon was he torn from his class. He went to the Workmen's Circle Sanitarium, an advanced case of tuberculosis even then. But, he improved and returned the following fall to teach, and write, and lecture. His friends implored him to refrain, but there was need for every member of the party, he said. The internecine fight was on. He threw himself into it, for he was a revolutionist to the very bone. He had but one reply. "The movement is my life." A year later, he left for a sanitarium in Los Angeles. No improvement was manifest. He returned East,

appeared at two or three momentous and historical meetings of the party and left again for the Workmen's Sanitarium only to spend his last months in the racks of the torture of a disease that sapped every bit of his strength.

And yet to the very end, when he could barely speak above a whisper, when he could write only a few lines at a time, he spent his last energy on the movement, reading and writing, writing, writing. His last article, part of a series of articles, was on an all-inclusive party. (The article will appear in a subsequent issue.)

Sometimes intellects of his stature devote themselves to one particular phase, to one partial aspect of a movement. But not Haim Kantorovitch. He was a versatile person, a rounded person.

In order to pursue his philosophical interests he followed closely developments in the newer sciences without which modern philosophy has no basis. He knew well the writings of Eddington, Jeans, Russell, Einstein, Planck. His knowledge of literature was boundless; he had read everything significant in fiction and was an ardent student and critic of the so-called "Proletarian Literature."

Haim Kantorovitch thought no one was indispensable. Haim Kantorovitch is gone. We know Haim Kantorovitch was not indispensable. We know our loss. Only in one manner can we help, partially, to overcome our loss, in the one way that Haim Kantorovitch would, above all, have wished—by re-dedicating ourselves to the socialist movement in order to prepare ourselves to serve as the vanguard of the working class. Small as the left-wing movement in our party may be, he was certain it was correct, and that it would ultimately be a force in the movement. Our loss must be transmitted into revolutionary class-conscious action.

Haim Kantorovitch is gone. But, he lives on in revolutionary Socialism.

Anna Bercowitz.

Some Issues of the Presidential Campaign

Harry W. Laidler

IT goes without saying that the primary job of socialists in this campaign is the job of making socialists, of convincing the people of the country that there is no hope of bringing about security, plenty, genuine democracy and peace short of Socialism.

Under capitalism, whether under the "New Deal," the "Old Deal" or the "Square Deal" capitalism, life for the masses is becoming increasingly insecure. We are, it is true, in for another temporary boom. Industrial production is now above the average of 1923-25, and is mounting upward to that of 1929. But the industrial masters of the land are still unable to find employment for between 10 million and 12 million men and women, and, when the 1929 levels are reached, millions of capable workers will still be searching in vain for work. Within a short time the curve of the business cycle will be pointing downward again, and we will be face to face with another severe depression.

The old capitalist system kept going in the past despite its rhythmic periods of hard times, following its so-called

good times. But in the past, we were able to depend upon a number of factors to give us a new lease of life, factors which we cannot depend upon, at least to the same extent, at present.

As I have tried to point out at greater length elsewhere * we were engaged in the past in converting America from a wilderness into an industrialized country. We found foreign markets easy to obtain. Our population was expanding. Our debt structure was at a low level. Our inequalities of income were not great. Our free competitive system led us more or less to adjust our prices to the demands for good. And, after a major depression, it took a long time to saturate the markets with goods.

All of these factors made it possible for us to muddle along under capitalism. Today our country is settled from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Our foreign markets are ceasing to expand. Our population growth is coming to a standstill. Our debt structure is rising. Our price structure, under monopoly-capitalism, is becoming high and rigid. And, under our mass production, it takes but a few months before we are able to fill the shelves of our distributive plants again with goods.

All of these forces are making for increasing industrial chaos as the years go on. Our main drive in this campaign should be, therefore, a drive toward Socialism, as the one way to security, and more than that, as the one way effectively to defeat fascism and to abolish war.

While educating the workers in the need for Socialism, we should likewise urge a number of immediate changes as a means of relieving present day distress and of strengthening the workers in their fight for the far flung goal of a cooperative order. The Socialist Party urges, among these immediate changes, the following:

1. The Workers' Rights Amendment

Perhaps the most urgent immediate need before the American people is a constitutional amendment conferring upon Congress positive powers to pass social insurance legislation, and other legislation for the public welfare, including the power to socialize industry. The Supreme Court of the United States was given no power in the Constitution to declare social legislation of Congress unconstitutional. This power the Court usurped. It should be shorn of that power. The people of the United States, through their chosen representatives, should be able to decide their own destiny. That destiny should not be left in the hands of elderly judges, most of them formerly corporation attorneys, in Washington. Congress should be given affirmative power over labor and social legislation. Industry is increasingly national in its scope. Labor legislation should likewise be national. Labor should not have to go cap in hand to the 48 legislatures of the land and beg for labor legislation over industries that are intimately connected with the whole economic life of the country.

2. Child Labor Amendment

Socialists have long stood for the Child Labor Amendment to the federal constitution, followed by adequate legislation by Congress. In 1930, over a quarter of a million boys and girls were employed between the ages of 10 and 13, nearly a half million between 14 and 15 and nearly a million and a half between 16 and 17. The elimination of child labor will take hundreds of thousands if not millions of children out of industry, and

*Program for Modern America.

give jobs to the jobless adults. It will remove from industry the depressing effect of the miserably low wages now offered to children, wages, in most cases, of only a few dollars a week. It will remove the child from a work-a-day environment that frequently leads to demoralizations in body, mind and spirit, and will give him a chance for an education formerly closed to him. Twenty-four of the 36 states required for the adoption of a constitutional amendment have already passed the Child Labor Amendment. A drive should be made immediately on the legislatures of the recalcitrant states for the ratification of this amendment.

3. Social Insurance

With or without a Workers' Right Amendment, we socialists urge the immediate enactment of a comprehensive adequate federal system of social insurance, including old age pensions, unemployment insurance and health insurance. Socialists have fought for years for such a system. The principle of social insurance was formerly bitterly attacked by Republicans and Democrats alike. Now it is accepted. But the system of social insurance adopted by the Roosevelt administration is a travesty on any sound system. It utterly excludes systems of health insurance at a time when every advanced industrial country has successfully conducted such systems for years, and at a time when, according to the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care, "it is impossible for 99 per cent of the families to set aside any reasonable sum of money with positive assurance that that sum will purchase all needed medical care."

Mr. Roosevelt has utterly failed to urge a federal system of unemployment insurance. He has left such insurance to the 48 states of the union. Unemployment insurance is national in practically every country where compulsory insurance systems prevail. It should be national here. As Professor Bakke, an authority on this subject, declares: "Unemployment is a national problem. The local community is subject to the same economic weather as individuals and exercises as little control over it." "Under the Wagner-Lewis Bill," declares Bryce M. Stewart, Director of Research, Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc., "broad industrial spreading of risk will be impossible because many states have no diversification of industry and in some a single industry or a few with high rates of unemployment bulk large in the total." The only practicable way to deal with this problem, these authorities declare, is by organizing the insurance system on a national scale.

We socialists maintain that unemployment insurance should be placed on a federal basis; that benefits given should be adequate; that all involuntarily unemployed should be included within the system and that the nation should contribute toward the insurance fund, the contributions to be raised from income, inheritance and excess profits taxes. We agree, in other words, with the principles laid down in the Frazier-Lundeen bill, though we would amend some of the provisions of that bill.

As for old age pensions, we would eliminate the cumbersome and complicated dual system of old age assistance and pensions. We would reduce the age for receiving old age pensions at least to 60. We would include all with inadequate income within the scope of the law. We would rapidly increase the present low pension to a level that would permit of a decent and human existence, and we would raise the pension fund

from taxes imposed on those most able to pay.

4. Minimum Wages

Today minimum income in the case of millions of families is tragically low. Half of the 728 homework families visited by the investigators of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Women and Children in 1934 reported weekly earnings of $3.54 a week or less, although these wages sometimes represented the work of several members of the family. Similar conditions exist among the sharecroppers of the Southwest and among many other occupational groups. Even in 1929, sixty percent of wage-earning families obtained less than sufficient to allow them to live a life of health and decency. Some way must be devised to prevent the continuance of such criminally low wages if we are to insure a human, American existence to large masses of our people, and increase the ability of our people to buy the goods that can be produced by our mass industries. Socialists stand for the setting of such minimum wages as to insure a decent standard of living to all.

5. Shorter Work-Week

On the economic and political field, socialists have long waged the battle for a shorter work-week. When the productivity of industry is increased through technological or other efficiency methods, this increased productivity should be reflected in higher wages or in shorter hours or both. This has not been done except to a small degree in the past. In too many cases, the installation of a new machine has meant the discharge of large armies of workers. Those who remained at work toiled as hard and as long as before the machine was installed. The profit went to the owners.

The National Bureau of Economic Research estimated that the output per worker in the manufacturing industry increased approximately 43 percent during the years 1919 to 1929. "The work that required 100 men in 1919 could be done by 70 in 1929." Yet, despite this increase in productivity, the hours of labor were scarcely reduced during that period. The maximum work-week remained at about 51 hours a week from 1920 to 1929, while, during the early part of the depression, it increased to about 55 hours a week. Yet, if the maximum work-week had been reduced in the twenties in proportion to the increase in industrial productivity, the average work-week would have been on a 30 hour basis. During the depression, productivity continued to increase. According to Charles A. Bliss of the National Bureau of Economic Research, it advanced during the years 1929 to 1933 by 27 percent.

The reduction of hours without a reduction of pay would undoubtedly lead to the absorption of a considerable portion of the army of the unemployed, stimulate purchases, and constitute another factor tending to absorb the army of the unemployed.

6. Public Works and Relief

A sixth factor leading to a greater degree of security is the development of a far more comprehensive system of public works than has thus far been developed.

The unemployed want work, not relief. If private industry is unwilling or unable to give them work public industry must step in. Under Roosevelt public works has absorbed only a small part of the unemployed, and under conditions that, in many cases, lowered trade union standards. It but scratched

the surface of the housing problem, though a great public housing project for the building of workers' houses would alone have, directly and indirectly, given work to millions of the unemployed. Socialists insist on a public works and relief program adequate to meet the needs of the times.

7. Taxation

Under the recent barrages against the Roosevelt administration, Mr. Roosevelt and his advisers are maintaining that they will not increase taxes after the 1936 election. They have done little to use the system of taxation as a means of securing a better distribution of wealth or of raising sufficient money for much needed social services. The 1935 taxation bill increased the amount raised by only about $200,000,000 in spite of the increased billions of dollars needed for relief, public works and social insurance. In 1936, the tax bill had for its object primarily the raising of only enough additional funds to pay for the bonus and the farm subsidy. If the taxes on incomes were increased to the level in Great Britain, at least $2,000,000 more could be obtained from additional income taxes alone.

Socialists urge drastic increases in income and inheritance taxes, in excess profit taxes, and the imposition of land values taxation, so that the community-at-large may be able to secure to itself the increments in land values due to society's effort. We urge a capital levy for the purpose of working out the terrific debt burden imposed on our people.

8. Public Ownership

The aim of socialists is the social ownership and democratic management of the socially necessary means of production and distribution to the end that security, peace, freeodm and plenty may be the heritage of all. This new cooperative order cannot be attained until the workers by hand and brain dedicated to the socialist ideal, obtain control of the reigns of government. In the meanwhile socialists urge the extension of public ownership of our national resources, our public utilities and of other basic industries, with as much control as may be possible by worker, consumer and technician. Today over half of our iron resources, seven-eighths of the raw material used in the making of aluminum and most of the world's nickel, are owned respectively by one corporation. Eight corporations own eighty per cent of anthracite coal. Other resources are concentrating in few hands. These resources are exploited for profit. They are exploited wastefully. The Natural Recources Board in 1934 declared that, on one of our oil fields, as much natural gas was blown into the air as would supply in that year almost every housewife in the United States with gas. These resources should be owned by the nation and run for the benefit of the nation. Our public utility monopolies—our electric, gas, water supply, telephones, telegraphs, railroads, etc.—should likewise be publicly owned. In every publicly owned industry trade unions should be recognized and trade union conditions should prevail. Managers should be appointed not by politicians but by boards representative of employees, consumers and technical experts. Any considerable steps toward public ownership and democratic control of industry, however, must await the advent of a socialist government. But we can begin with the task now.

9. Civil Liberties

Under a declining capitalism increasing attempts at suppression of free

speech, free press and free assemblage are made by the economic rulers of industry. A flood of gag laws, sedition laws, loyalty oath bills have been introduced into Congress and the legislatures during the past few years. For the most part, the Roosevelt administration has remained silent in the face of these fascist attempts. "I feel," wrote Oswald Garrison Villard of *The Nation*, a short time ago, "that the President's greatest failure is in the matter of standing up for fundamental American rights and liberties. Not one word has come from his lips as yet on these questions that are so vital if our Republic is to endure."

Some of the worst instances of fascist tendencies have been seen in such Democratic states as Arkansas, Indiana and Florida. Nor has the Republican Party or its Hearst and American Liberty League supporters shown any solicitude for fundamental civil rights. Quite the contrary. These elements in the Republican Party like to crush out movements for fundamental social change. The Socialist Party stands alone as a consistent champion of civil rights. Socialists, wherever elected to office, may be depended upon to battle for the preservation and extension of our civil liberties, and to do everything that in them lies for the building of a system of economic democracy under which alone civil liberties may survive and flourish. The fight for civil liberties constitutes one of the great issues of this campaign.

10. Foreign Relations.

Finally, socialists insist that America must begin a right-about-face on its international program if it is to avoid a plunge into another war. Of all the parties, today, we are the one party whose representatives can be depended upon to oppose all capitalist wars. The last Congress appropriated a larger sum of money for the army and navy than was appropriated by any nation in the world in times of peace. Socialists propose a frontal attack on militarism in all its forms; a neutrality policy that will seek to keep us out of immediate wars, while building up a system of industry which will eliminate the causes of war. We urge the reduction of trade barriers, the development of international organizations for the allocation of raw materials, and, most of all, the development of powerful economic, cooperative and political organizations of labor dedicated to world peace.

It is the task of Socialism, while gaining increasing strength on the political field, to lend of its strength to the raising of living standards, the suppression of fascist reaction and the warding off of international conflicts while building for a world order. But it is the socialist movement's supreme duty to show the world that there can be no genuine security, democracy or peace under a system where we put our economic life in the hands of private profiteers, and that the one most important political issue of the times is that of transfering our system of monopoly capitalism with its tragic and increasing evils into that of Socialism, with its promise of the good life for all.

The ASM assumes no responsibility for signed articles. Such articles express the opinion of the writers. The ASM strives to serve as a free forum for all shades of opinion within our movement.

Political Significance of Fund Raising

Marjorie Kipp

WITH the political picture becoming more complex in America today, it is becoming ever more necessary that the Socialist Party become organizationally more cohesive and more centralized.

Particularly is this necessary with new political alignments on the horizon after elections. What these political alignments will be, how much of a socialist orientation they will have, will depend to a large extent on how influential are socialists in mass organizations building the re-alignments, which in turn depends on how well we socialists have put our own house in order and built a disciplined national organization sure of its direction.

A new party was born at the Cleveland convention. Theoretically it is a vital party which can play an important part on the American political scene. Organizationally it is not yet well enough developed to make the most of the situation.

We have done much more thinking about our relationship to a mass party—a farmer-labor party. If never before, we can now see the necessity for a well disciplined national organization; the need for becoming less a loose aggregate of people with the same general principles and more a group of firm, disciplined revolutionists with enough national direction to take advantage of each political and economic situation as it develops.

We need right now to make the proper preparation for a correct relationship with a mass party. Making this proper preparation means taking advantage of every organizational and political function a party such as ours has.

It means making a success of the campaign fund drive for $100,000. Raising money, no matter for what purpose, has always seemed a difficult task to most people. Socialists have been no exceptions.

It is generally recognized that the Socialist Party cannot become effective in the way we wish without the kind of an organization which a successful fund-raising drive implies—whether for a $100,000 campaign fund drive or a drive to maintain local, state and national organizations.

Success in fund-raising implies success in other functions of our organization. It strengthens the organization by matching resolutions with actual work.

Not only is it necessary to finance the party adequately so that literature can be gotten out, radio broadcasts made, organizers put in the field, a staff of persons with political responsibilities maintained, but the process of raising money has several other functions. *It can draw into activity every party member, putting upon him definite responsibilities. It can bring into active support numbers of sympathizers who, asked to support the organization financially, feel then a responsibility and an active interest in it.*

By going about the business of money raising systematically and in a business-

like manner we can increase the efficiency of our organization. We have not begun to touch the resources which are available to us. We "touch" the same individuals year in and year out and miss our real chance to make organizational hay while the sun shines.

There are many workers, white collared and blue shirted, who are more than willing to contribute financially to the party if we would only give them the chance, incredible as this may seem to comrades in well-organized districts who sometimes feel that they have exploited these resources almost to a limit.

We have not gotten the financial support from working-class organizations—or from individuals in these organizations through the use of collection lists—as much as we might. It is surprising the support we do get from these sources when we give them the chance. And the nickels, dimes and quarters mount up surprisingly fast.

Raising money is an integral function of the organization. It is not something separate and distinct from other functions necessary to build a revolutionary party and spread its emblem.

In our desire for theoretical clarity we are prone to make discussion and resolutions substitutes for action. We cannot travel the road to power, as has often been pointed out, by theoretical clarity *alone*. We must also have organizational clarity which we carry over into action.

The history of the revolutionary movement shows that organizational questions were discussed as seriously as theoretical questions and matters of policy. In the socialist movement in Russia before the war, revolutionary elements were constantly driving toward the building of a centralized, disciplined party organization. Debates centered around whether organizational efforts should all be made and controlled locally with spasmodic attempts at fund-raising and supporting local newspapers, or whether the organization should be more centralized with national direction, a centrally controlled party press and centrally directed systematic fund-raising. The reformists took the former view, revolutionists, the latter.

A strong organization of determined workers can give spontaneous struggles of workers direction and socialist orientation. Taking the matter of fund-raising seriously can help in the building of such an organization.

We face in the coming years serious efforts toward organizing a farmer-labor party. Our organization, if well disciplined and carrying out socialist policy consistently, can safeguard these efforts from false moves. We will not be overwhelmed by the masses if we build now a systematic organization.

Planning well for a fund-raising campaign, then acting on the plan can help to build such an organization. It will strengthen our contacts, train local people and create real party unity. It will strengthen every kind of party activity, whether inter-organizational, educational, work in mass organizations, youth, unemployed or organized labor.

Now is the time to start building these kinds of contacts and this kind of an organization. Now is the time to build a national organization which will bring into activity all party members, will continue to educate them, will improve organizational methods and policies and will turn the party into a centralized effective and aggressive organization.

How Shall We Conduct Our Election Campaign?

Gus Tyler

A MATTER of life or death faces our party. Unless the Socialist Party is able to draw the proper organizational conclusions from its rapidly reorientated theory, there will develop either a) a fixed gap between party theory and practice which will make our organization just a conglomeration of irresponsibe phrasemongers, or b) a tendency to drag the revolutionary theory of the party down to the old reformist practice. The conduct of an electoral campaign is an excellent point of departure for a consideration of this problem at the present moment.

For a revolutionary Socialist Party, a campaign is conducted with the ultimate view of preparing the masses for revolutionary struggle. The electoral campaign can play an important role in this process of preparation because it is an instrument whereby the party can *mold, express and enforce the socialist will of the masses.*

To Mold the Socialist Will of the Masses

To the extent that the will of the masses finds spontaneous programmatic expression, it does so through trade unions, farmers' organizations, unemployed bodies, fraternal societies, and similar mass organizations. These organizations have specific and limited functions. As a result, the demands formulated by such organizations are generally limited both in latitude and perspective.

The task of a Socialist Party is to bring to the fore the general *class* demands and to emphasize the general perspectives of the working class movement. In addition, the party advances such demands as will give proletarian leadership and revolutionary direction to the non-proletarian elements of capitalist society. Finally, the party brings the international interests of the working class to the fore instead of placing sole emphasis upon the national questions.

To Express the Socialist Will of the Masses

Separate strikes, petitions, general strikes, mass demonstrations are various ways of telling the capitalist class what it is that the workers want. A huge vote for the socialist program is an effective way of declaring the demands of the working class. We do not intend in this way to "mass pressure" the capitalist class into meeting the basic needs of the working class. But the greater the socialist vote the more clearly does the working class state its demands and the more can it win momentarily from capitalism.

To Enforce the Socialist Will of the Masses

The legalist socialist will only too readily agree with the revolutionary that elections are an excellent means of *enforcing* the socialist will of the masses. And by this the legalist socialist visualizes a rising vote, the infiltration of socialists into public office, and a purely legislative realization of Socialism.

Although a great deal can be accomplished by electoral victory, especially if the elected official remembers that he was elected to advance the interests of the working class, the election of officials is *not the sole nor chief enforcing aspect* of a campaign.

During the election campaign, the Socialist Party campaigner must call upon the working class and its allies not merely to vote socialist but to undertake broad, energetic, extra-parliamentary struggles for the general demands raised by the working class party during the campaign. This call to battle is a distinctive and crucial aspect of a revolutionary election campaign. This utilization of the campaign to broaden, intensify and centralize the struggle of the proletarian and non-proletarian elements through their extra-parliamentary organizations is what distinguishes a party of struggle from a party of politicians, a revolutionary party from an electoral machine.

James Oneal, in a debate with Robert Minor, on "Socialism versus Communism," stated the following:

> "Let me say, comrades, in conclusion that as a socialist I have never contended that we are going to triumph through the ballot—never have—and if you have studied the movement you will know that long before the Russian Revolution occurred, in every branch and local organization all over the world, socialists always considered and discussed the question: 'Will the ruling classes acquiesce in the mandate of the masses at the polls?' It is generally conceded that in most places they will not."

Whether or not the ruling classes will "acquiesce," however, is not dependent merely upon their temperament. The answer also lies in "our" behavior. If we concentrate upon building an electoral machine, if we do not take direct advantage of a crisis in the capitalist state machinery, if we insist upon preparing only for a legal rise to power, then we may rest assured that the capitalist class will not "acquiesce." But if we prepare to meet the economic sabotage, fascist gangs and armed forces of capitalism with a well trained and disciplined extra-parliamentary force ready for action, then perhaps the capitalist class will have to "acquiesce." In travelling the road to power our compass reads: Si vis pacem, para bellum. (If you wish peace, prepare for war!)

Preparation for war does not consist merely of speeches on the impending conflict, although every military leader realizes the necessity for such propaganda. Preparation also consists of a "standing army," trained leaders, discipline, morale, numerical support, and the like.

Our "final conflict" will not come on a date nor under conditions set by us. But whatever the date or the conditions, we must have certain forces in readiness if we are to take advantage of the situation to capture power. Without understanding these forces and without keeping them constantly in mind as our guides for party activity, the highest level our revolutionary work can reach is propaganda, propaganda without the flesh and blood of organizational backing. Viewing a revolutionary crisis then from the dynamic and subjective angle of what we can prepare in order to gain success, the following four features stand out:

1. A mass upheaval against capitalism, represented in a united struggle of the broadest sector of the population.

2. Working class organizations, trained in disciplined, militant struggle.

3. Proletarian leadership over non-proletarian groups which have been involved in the struggle.

4. A party capable of giving such centralized leadership to this upheaval as will convert it into a struggle for the conquest of power.

Now what is the relationship between these four necessary elements for success and our day by day activities, and the relationship between such day by day activities and our electoral campaign?

1. Preparing for a united struggle.

In dealing with "molding the socialist will of the masses," we indicated the role of the party in raising the general class demands. The task of making the mass organizations aware of these general class demands is one that occupies 365 days in every year. During these 365 days we put forward these demands *essentially in order to get these mass organizations to conduct united struggles on the basis of these unifying demands.* During election time, we do not abandon such work, conducted by disciplined socialists under party directives, but intensify such work so that we may implement our appeal for united struggle with an appeal to vote socialist.

2. Training militant mass organizations.

In addition to the role of the Socialist Party as a sort of nervous system, with nerve fibers reaching into every mass organization and into the outermost sectors of the unorganized, in order to coordinate the behavior of the entire mass, the socialist has a more specialized task in training each individual mass organization in militant class-conscious action. In solving the specific problems of these mass organizations constructed for specific purposes, the socialist must seek to develop, not stifle, the membership; to raise, not degrade, the intellectual level of the organization; to encourage understanding devotion, rather than blind obedience and servile acceptance, on the part of the rank and file; to press the class point of view rather than a narrow selfish viewpoint; to propose militant action that will develop the morale and fighting power of the worker.

Such work, dealing with the specific application of socialist attitude toward the concrete problems of mass organizations, is not something apart from the regular conduct of a socialist campaign.

A statement from Norman Thomas, attacking gangsterism in some particular union, is not only in line with good socialist principles but will also get votes. The activity of recognized socialists inside of trade unions along progressive lines will also increase the prestige of the party.

Not even bourgeois parties can avoid becoming entangled in the struggles that go on inside mass organizations. Certain leading Democrats have threatened to bolt Roosevelt unless he shows a decided change of attitude toward the campaign of John L. Lewis. And John L. Lewis, in turn, has utilized Roosevelt's tacit attitude to made the C.I.O. a campaign instrument for re-electing the President.

Although affairs inside the mass orizations during campaign time will directly affect our party prestige and our ganizations are not directly electoral issues, in the sense that they do not constitute formal planks in the typically vote.
electoral campaign platform, yet the stand we take in these organizations all year round and the attitude we express regarding the problems of these organ-

3. To link proletarian and non-proletarian elements.

In a previous paragraph we considered the role of the party as the formulator of a program which will give revo-

lutionary direction to the non-proletarian elements. Election time, when all sections of the population, unorganized as well as organized, are considering general social questions, is the most opportune time to analyze the problems and the role of the farmer, the middle class, the student, the aged, the youth, the women. The vision of the proletarian elements can be broadened and the support of the non-proletarian elements gained.

This task of uniting these various social groups around the party program is, however, not merely propagandist nor electoral, in the sense of getting individuals or organizations to support the socialist ticket; in addition to such formal unity the party must, through the concerted efforts of its members, get *actual unity* based on active struggle.

4. Building a revolutionary party.

Just as human character is a result of habit and training so our party's character will be determined by our activity. Should the party be successful in carrying on the aforementioned work on the basis of a revolutionary program, it will prepare both the working class and itself for the final conquest of power.

From what has gone before, we may establish certain distinctions between a revolutionary socialist attitude toward mass organizations, on one hand, and the attitude of reformists, third period communists, and sectarians, on the other hand.

The reformist socialist attempts to establish a sort of tete-a-tete relationship between the party and the mass organizations on the basis of a *quid pro quo* proposition, very much like the relationship between Roosevelt and the Labor Non-Partisan League.

The "third period" communist tried to make the mass organizations appendages of the party, with a full party program and direct party control.

The sectarian of the Socialist Labor Party variety looks upon the mass organization as a good place to belittle all struggles for immediate demands and to make speeches on the socialist commonwealth.

The revolutionary socialist rejects all these concepts. We do not belittle but encourage struggle for immediate demands. We do not desire a mere formal exchange of courtesy cards between the mass organizations and the party but work to unite them in struggle on an advanced and advancing program. In order to do this we do not wish the mass organizations to ape the party; we recognize the mass organizations to be means whereby non-party, non-revolutionary, backward elements are involved in struggles for specific demands.

Every detail of our campaigning, right down to the simple agitational street corner speech, must breathe this spirit of struggle. And the doctor's mirror that tests the revolutionary breathing of our party is our popular presentation of the meaning of reforms.

The reformist socialist assures his audience that an accumulation of modest reforms will eventually imperceptibly transform itself into Socialism.

The crass opportunist of the ward heeler variety puts forward certain reform measures just as "vote-catchers," entirely disconnected from the struggle of the working class and the fight for Socialism.

The sectarian either attacks or omits discussion of immediate demands. "Reforms are chloroform."

For the revolutionary socialist, immediate demands constitute the basis for immediate struggle. Because immediate reforms bring immediate gain

to the working class, they will fiight for it. And because the workers, in great numbers, will undertake such struggles, we consider the fight for immediate demands to be the grindstone for sharpening the swords of revolution.

From the foregoing it is clear that the conduct of a revolutionary Socialist Party during a campaign is *many sided*, radically different from that of a reformist party or a bourgeois party both in form and content. The form is different to the extent that we do not limit ourselves to a direct appeal to the electorate by individual effort, but work in an organized manner through mass organizations. The content is vastly different not only in our differing programs but also in the fact that *we do not limit ourselves to the platform as a basis for votes* but extend our work to analysis of every important social phenomenon in order to develop a broad and immediate struggle of the masses. Analysis of the steel strike, the CIO, the European situation, the American Revolution, the new Soviet constitution, Cuban imperialism, a demonstration of the unemployed, etc. is proper work for a Socialist Party going through a campaign. The party must not only make analyses, but on the basis of such analyses, must give directives, limited not only to how to vote but also what to do. And to the extent that the masses follow our lead on what to do they will also know how to vote.

Unified party direction to such many-sided work takes on real meaning, however, only when it operates on a national, and preferably, on an international scale. Organizing the diversified elements of America for a united struggle is an especially complicated task. Provincialism runs high in the U. S. Topographically, economically, even ethnologically, it is varied. But just because it is so, the party dare not permit a variety of Socialisms to grow up but must exert every ounce of energy to give a common line, a disciplined attitude and direction to the entire party.

This in no wise means that a socialist when organizing farmers should harangue them on the oppressive conditions existing in New York sweat shops. It means that the party's farm program, the party's attitude toward farm movements, the party's analysis of the Union Party, the party's proposals for struggle on a national scale, the party's plans for forging unity between farm and proletarian elements must be uniformly pushed, with proper accent and tone, in proper time and rhythm, through disciplined party action.

The chief instrumentality of the party for giving centralized direction to such a campaign is the national campaign paper of the party. This paper is the mouthpiece of the party; it must be as all-sided, as balanced as the party itself. This paper must not simply sing the party melody as set down in the party platform; it must provide the organizational harmonies; it must set the tempo; it must mark the accents; it must provide the scores for the various instruments. In short, a revolutionary party, unlike a reformist machine, does not sing an electoral solo; it conducts an orchestral symphony. The party press is the score!

The first major task in building a Socialist Party of the U.S.A., in fact as well as name, is the creation of a party press on a national scale with national circulation. Other papers of a local nature may develop, giving local leadership in applying the line to local problems. But all local papers are secondary and subordinate to the national press.

The task of such a national paper is not merely or primarily to cry "Down with Capitalism" and "Up with Socialism." On this point all socialists are agreed and a national paper has nothing distinctive to contribute along these lines. The *raison d'etre* for a national paper is to give us a national line, to establish a uniform *attitude* through constant analyses of changing social events, to propose uniform solutions, to pose uniform tasks. This is a task always before us, especially before us during election time, and trebly before us in our party today when we are trying to weave the loose organizational strands of our reformist past into a strong, revolutionary party.

The problem which we face now in the matter of building a national press as part of a revolutionary party is not new nor peculiar to us. When the Russian Social-Democrats began, even before the Revolution of 1905, to consider the primary tasks of *building a revolutionary party* the problem of an All-Russian paper, and the character of such a paper, came to the fore.

One of the most *practical* workers in the revolutionary movement, devoted himself to the task of answering the many objections to such a paper.

First, the common objection that such a paper will appeal only to the intelligentzia and not the masses! He replied:

> "This postulate goes wrong on the point which Svoboda always goes wrong on and which is radically wrong, and that is, it sets up the intelligent workers in contrast to the 'masses.' Even the intelligent workers have been engaged 'almost exclusively in the economic struggle' during the past few years. Moreover, the masses will never learn to conduct the political struggle until we help to *train* leaders for this struggle both from among the intelligent workers and from among the intellectuals; and such leaders can be trained *solely* by systematic and every day appreciation of *all* aspects of our political life, of *all* attempts at protest and struggle on the part of various classes and on various grounds."

This passage can be requoted word for word and applied to our American party today.

Second, the usual objection that such a paper will be a literary masterpiece without live agitational value! He replied:

> "Those who regard *Iskra's* 'plan' as a manifestation of 'literariness' have totally failed to understand the substance of the plan . . . *Iskra* wrote: the publication of an all-Russian political newspaper must be the *main line* that must guide us in our work of unswervingly developing, deepening and expanding this organization (i.e. a revolutionary organization always prepared to support every protest and outbreak.) Pray tell me: when a bricklayer lays bricks in various parts of an enormous structure the like of which he has never seen before, is it 'paper' work to use a line to help him find the correct place to put each brick, to indicate to him the ultimate goal of the work as a whole, to enable him to use not only every brick but even every piece of brick which, joining with the bricks placed before and after it, forms a complete and all embracing line? And are we not now passing through a period in our party life when we have bricks and bricklayers, but lack the guiding line which all could see and follow?"

Are we in America today not indeed passing through precisely such a period? This country is just chock full of "bricks and bricklayers." There is a heavy stratum of non-socialist intelligent workers in the trade union, farm, and unemployed movement. There is a broad anti-war sentiment among intelligent elements. There is a wide radical ferment among intelligent students. There are publications galore. Agitational literature exposing shop condi-

tions, the horrors of war, the sordidness of capitalist culture. Trade union journals, publications for industrial unionism. Exposes of political corruption, attacks on finance capital. The duty of the party and the party press is not that of imitating or even summarizing all this material: if we do, our party becomes just a pile of bricks thrown helter-skelter by aimless bricklayers, and not a firm planned structure.

> A paper is not merely a collective propagandist and collective agitator; it is also a collective organizer. In this respect it can be compared to the scaffolding erected around a building in construction; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organized labor.

During a campaign, an electoral campaign, more than any other time, when the masses are thinking of the general, broad social questions our national press can best act as the scaffolding for every petty, minor struggle to find its place in the complete revolutionary structure.

It is difficult to state to what extent our party, in this year of 1936, can begin to function as a revolutionary organization. In any case, it is due time to undertake an investigation of what constitutes revolutionary forms of party activity. In discussing these practical tasks we shall find that our varying concepts spring from varying approaches to the basic nature of the Socialist Party. But that for some other time!

People's Front Tried and Found Wanting, Spain 1936

John Newton Thurber

THE struggle which is being carried on in Spain today between the workers and the fascist agents of Spanish and world capitalism serves to throw in bold relief the essential struggle which is going on throughout the world between the forces of the workers on the one hand and the forces of capitalism on the other. It serves well to clarify many of the bruited points which are confronting the workers of every country in their struggle against war and fascism.

In rallying our forces in today's struggle to assist our gallant fellow workers in Spain, we can at the same time pause to ponder some of the brutal truths which their struggle serves to bring forward.

For what are the Spanish workers fighting? The immediate answer is that they are fighting against the fascist aggressor. They are fighting for the preservation of their liberties. They are fighting for the salvation of their democratic rights. They are fighting in support of their government. These are the answers which are being given. We are told that this is a part of a world struggle between democracy and fascism.

But is this correct? Have the Spanish workers conducted themselves in such a way as to defend that which they had, to preserve the regime under which they have existed most discontentedly during the past six months, to preserve bourgeois democracy? No! The whole course of action of those in Spain who are fighting the front line battle of the work-

ers of the world today shows us that this analysis is incorrect. The Spanish workers, especially those of the left socialist group, which contains the majority of the trade union movement, the Party of Marxian Unity with its great strength in Catalonia, and the anarchists, know that they are not fighting for the status quo of the past six months. They know that it is impossible to maintain the status quo of bourgeois democracy against the onrush of fascist reaction. They know, as the Socialist Party is pointing out both in Spain and in the United States this year, that the choice is not between fascism and democracy, as the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International would have it, but that the choice lies between Socialism and capitalism, of which fascism is but a form.

In the new program which was recommended for the 1936 Congress of the Socialist Party of Spain this is brought out most clearly. The majority of the Committee of the Organization, which submitted the new program, under the leadership of Largo Caballero, sponsored this document which may be regarded as embodying the ideology of the leaders of the left in the Spanish civil war today. In supporting the new program Caballero declared that "the immense majority of the working masses realize that the Republic is unable to solve a number of concrete points . . ." The Spanish workers of today are well read, they are studying constantly, he added, "and this causes them to acquire a class spirit and a revolutionary consciousness which they did not formerly possess."

The program was bold in stating that "There are only two ways out of this crisis: one is fascism and the other Socialism." In analyzing the left road, the program stated: "The other way out of the crisis is revolutionary Socialism. Bourgeois democracy has fulfilled its historic mission in some countries, and elsewhere it will be difficult for it alone to confront the capitalist forces which wish to replace it by a totalitarian fascist state. The only class which can prevent fascism is the proletariat, not only by defending bourgeois democracy but by the conquest of political power by all available means, so as to achieve the socialist revolution and complete democracy—a classless democracy."

The last five years of Spanish history demonstrates that the socialist workers of Spain now recognize this issue and are consciously fighting today, not for the defense of that which was before, but for that which is ahead! They know that there is no defense against reaction under capitalism, that the only way to stop fascism is to displace capitalism by Socialism.

When the Spanish monarchy was overthrown and a republic established, many left elements felt that the problems of Spanish workers would thereafter be remedied by gradual reforms under capitalism. Socialists such as Caballero and Prieto did not hesitate to take office in the coalition ministry, a ministry which was in reality a People's Front government. Soon however it was found that the republican government, containing such bourgeois elements as Azana and others, could not solve the problems of Spain's workers. What was worse, in accepting office, Caballero found that he had to administer it in the interest of the capitalist state.

In the period of reaction which followed the first Republican government, the Spanish socialists had time to think over their mistakes in participating in it, in helping to administer a declining

capitalist order. After the electoral successes of the People's Front in February, 1936, the socialists declined to accept office, leaving this task to those who were still supporters of the capitalist system, the republicans.

The socialists correctly took the position that they would give the People's Front government "critical support." They would defend it from attacks from the right, but they were free to criticize it themselves from the left as insufficient to solve the problems of the workers, as not deciding the issue between capitalism and Socialism. While the communists were giving uncritical support to the People's Front in its pathetic inactivity during the five months preceding July, 1936, the left socialists carried on a steady criticism of the government. Even the right socialists, who advocated participation in the government, did not express great satisfaction with the course followed by it.

How did the People's Front proceed to solve the pressing problems which confronted it? By inaction! Their greatest failure was in their handling of the military, an army topheavy for such a small republic. Those army officers who were not trustworthy were not cashiered, but instead were transferred to such places as Morocco and the Canary Islands, there to plot the counter-attack on the Republican government. Naturally the government was unable to cope with the Spanish Phalanx, that militant, disciplined, anti-labor, independent, reactionary, armed force, which is the spearhead of reaction in Spain. Important economic questions were left largely untouched, while a wave of strikes was met with repression.

And when the fascist attack broke, what was the course followed by the pusillanimous regime? Inaction! The ministry of Quiroga resigned. Affairs were thrown into the hands of Azana, now president. When the workers demanded arms, in order to fight back the fascists, who had been allowed to choose their own time for the attack, Azana temporized. At first the request was declined, and only when pressure was applied did the workers get access to arms. If the workers of Spain had not formed an independent working class militia to fight the oncoming fascist troops, the democratic regime would have crumbled ignominiously. The action of Spanish workers behind the fascist lines in striking, thus paralyzing their support, likewise gave strength where there was no strength before.

The significant event of the Spanish civil war has been the independent action of the Spanish workers in the fight against fascism. Independent workers' troops have fought the front line battles. Workers' councils have administered affairs in much of the country. Dual power has been established. The power of the workers proved more virile than that of the republicans. Factories, shops, hotels, transport, all economic life, was taken over and operated by the workers, as the most efficient basis for their fight against reaction. The Catalonian workers, having declared their Soviet, became free from bourgeois entanglements. They were free to fight back reaction as it appeared.

While Caballero called for the dictatorship of the proletariat, he did not vigorously urge the formation of workers' councils, the basis of the workers' state. But the councils sprang into being as a natural growth, much as did their predecessors in the Paris Commune and in the Russian Soviets. What folly it is to go on mouthing phrases about the workers of Barcelona "fighting

to defend the government" and championing "democracy," even after the proclamation of the Catalonian Soviet! The Spanish workers have found their road to emancipation, and seem to be moving rapidly in that direction.

And what of the international situation? Italy and Germany rushed to the aid of the fascists, even the capitalist press tells us. We are left to conclude that democratic England, democratic France with its People's Front, and democratic America with its New Deal, are all on the side of the Spanish workers. It this the truth? No!

The People's Front in France has shown that it is an instrument unworthy of the workers' trust. While the sympathies of Blum are undoubtedly with his comrades in Spain, his hands are tied. While socialists and communists would have the French government give assistance to the Spanish workers, Blum is the prisoner of the Radicals, the liberal party of France. If he were to take steps to send aid to Spain, he would be out of office immediately. Instead of that vital time was lost negotiating for a treaty of neutrality which would only give the advantage to the fascists and tie the workers to the resources which they now have. The neutrality proposal thinly hides the incompetence of the French democratic regime when it comes to grips with reaction, even when that reaction is in another nation. The Spanish workers have cried out in protest against the inaction of the French People's Front.

What of England? British capitalists have cherished Spain as a happy hunting ground for a century. Although urging neutrality, British battleships intervened to check the Madrid ships which had succeeded in breaking the vital line of communications between Morocco and the fascists under General Franco. When the Catalonian workers proclaimed their Soviet, England gave ominous warnings regarding the responsibility for the preservation of property, sounding the rallying cry of imperialist intervention. England may oppose Italy in Spain. But the opposition is because of Gibraltar, not because of democracy. England does not mind a reactionary victory in Spain, but she does object to the victorious reactionaries being so indebted to Mussolini that they will give him concessions close to the keystone of the British empire.

And the United States? President Roosevelt at Lake Chatauqua treated us to a love feast displaying his affection for peace. He scooped the world with his neutrality letter. But what is going on behind this? Spain has been one of American capitalists' favorite field of investment during the past fifteen years. General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, International Telephone and Telegraph, Standard Oil—these names lead the list of those who are backing the Spanish fascists. Almost daily press reports enumerate Americans who have been forced to desert their posts of imperialist exploitation and flee the country. The agents of Standard Oil, John H. Jourdain and Vicomte de Sibour, were reported in the "New York Herald-Tribune" as succeeding in flying an airplane full of dynamite to the fascist troops of General Franco at Seville. The U. S. State department has given warning that property rights must be respected, thereby giving a legal basis for intervention to recover American-owned plants which may have fallen before the onrush of socialization by the Spanish workers, an intervention in which the unity of interest of international capitalism will be demonstrated

as it was in the attack on Paris in 1871, and on Russia in 1917 and 1918.

In the meanwhile the government of Russia, tied up in its foreign policies, finds it diplomatically dangerous to rush aid to the Spanish workers, and passes to the Russian trade unions the task of supporting their comrades. Bound to the bourgeois nations in mutual assistance pacts, it must not disturb the present equilibrium. The world revolution is in moth balls. The workers must trust the People's Front all over the world, so that it has been decreed that the struggle of the Spanish workers is one for democracy, not for Socialism.

Germany and Italy give assistance openly. They should be attacked as supporters of Spanish reaction. The foreign policy of Russia befogs the issue and must be clarified at all costs. But the capitalists of France, the capitalists of England, the capitalists of America, join hands and give open aid to the fascists as well as do the governments of Italy and Germany. They too must be attacked for what they are. We must guard against the war-making imperialists who will seek to add the cause of "Spanish Independence" to their growing list of slogans for the support of the next war, "The War to Save the World from Fascism."

American workers should give independent assistance to their embatttled comrades in Spain. French workers have in many instances spent their summer vacations fighting on the barricades side-by-side with their Spanish comrades in their independent militia. Funds are needed to carry forward the fight. Our Spanish comrades are fighting for their emancipation, and win or lose, they are fighting the vanguard battle for the emancipation of the workers of all the world. The splendid example of the I.L.G.W.U. in raising $100,000 for the Spanish workers can only make us regret that they fail to recognize issues as clearly in the United States.

The Spanish workers have little or no use for their outworn "democracy." They are fighting for a real and classless democracy, for Socialism. They have shown that bourgeois democracy could neither defend itself from reaction nor could it produce "peace, plenty and freedom" under capitalism. They are demonstrating to the workers of the world that in Socialism alone lies security from reaction. All else is illusory.

Liberals, democrats, republicans, People's Fronts, all alike will fall before the onrush of fascism, unless that rush is checked by the revolutionary working class, the fighters for Socialism, who if successful will end once and for all the danger of fascism. Those who are pointing to Azana, to the People's Front government of Blum, or to Roosevelt, as barriers to fascism and to reaction, are doing the workers of the world a great disservice.

Whether they succeed or fail, the Spanish workers are demonstrating that the only trust which the workers can have is in their own organized strength. All else will vanish in the moment of crisis. May their struggle inspire the workers everywhere!

Note: By accepting office under Azana, Caballero and his associates, including representatives of the Communist Party, have taken over responsibility for administration of the liberal capitalist regime under Azana. They have abandoned "critical support" of the People's Front. If Cabellero is to continue as a revolutionary leader, he must withdraw from office as soon as the emergency of civil war is past, unless a worker's government is set up.

J. N. T.

The C. I. O. and The Socialists

Maurice Spector

WHEN the Executive Council suspended the ten unions affiliated with the Committee for Industrial Organization, the American Federation of Labor invited its own doom. The thread-bare charges of "dual unionism" and "fomenting insurrection" cannot obscure the real issue, whether or not the millions of unorganized workers in the basic industries are to be organized. When the price of unity is the sabotage of organization, it comes too high. More than a million and a quarter members, or forty per cent of the Federation, associated in the CIO, realize that surrender to the ultimatums of Green would spell surrender to the magnates of the Steel Institute. No one should lightly contemplate the hazards of a split, but the American trade union movement is at the parting of the ways. The craft union bureaucracy which has ruled the Federation for half a century plainly sees the handwriting on the wall. Should the progressive forces of industrial unionism be allowed to work for their program from within, the bureaucracy would be overwhelmed. To retain its power, the Executive Council demands capitulation, or failing that, much prefers a split.

The record speaks for itself. At the San Francisco convention in 1934, the industrial unionists headed by John L. Lewis enacting a new role, thought they had won a victory. A compromise resolution authorized the Executive Council to issue charters for national and international unions in the automotive, cement, aluminum and other mass production industries. The Council was additionally instructed to promote and conduct a campaign of organization in the iron and steel industry. It seemed as if at last the A. F. of L. were no longer able to resist the combined force of mass pressure and logical argument in favor of organizing the unorganized along the lines dictated by the structure of capitalist production. But whatever illusions Lewis and his associates entertained that this resolution would be implemented by action were rapidly dispelled. The craft unions raised the chronic objection that no charter could be constitutionally granted which would infringe upon their jurisdictions. The craft unions, Green told a miners' convention, regard their jurisdictional charters as a "proprietary right."

A. F. of L. Sabotages Organization

One year later at the Atlantic City convention, the Executive Council reported that the automobile workers union would be limited to production workers, the craft unions reserving the exclusive right over mechanics. Moreover, the Council "did not believe that the time was ripe" to establish unions in the cement, aluminum, gas coke, and radio industries. The delegates learned that, owing to jurisdictional conflicts, no organizing campaign whatsoever had been carried on in the steel industry. The council refused the federal labor unions in the radio industry an industrial union charter and instead assigned

the eventual triumph of the forces of the CIO. The A. F. of L., or what emerges as such at the Tampa convention in November, will certainly stop at nothing. It will attempt to set up dual unions, it will endeavor to break the strikes of its industrial union rivals. But its efforts cannot prevail against the fundamental conditions of American industry and the requirements of the masses. The Lewis minority reports in favor of unrestricted charters in the mass production industries was defeated at Atlantic City, but the vote it received was the greatest endorsement of industrial unionism in the history of the A. F. of L. The minority represented craft as well as industrial union representatives. Since then central labor bodies and State Federations of Labor all over the country have been rallying to the support of the CIO. Once the bureaucracy has carried through the split, it will have to reckon with the fact of thousands of sympathizers of industrial unionism in the ranks of the Federation. But the CIO will find its greatest reservoir of strength in the organization of steel, rubber, automobile, cement, aluminum and radio industries. This is what will shift the centre of gravity.

Socialists and the CIO

It follows that every progressive element in the labor movement must enlist in support of the CIO's struggle with the A. F. of L. bureaucracy. But the Socialist Party, if it is to fulfill its mission as a party of social revolution, should be more than just another "progressive element." Rarely has the trade union movement offered greater scope and promise for militant leadership than in the present epoch of class warfare abroad and social ferment at home. Yet it is a sobering reflection that it is not a genuine Left Wing, taking its stand on the basis of the class struggle, that has assumed the leadership of the industrial union movement, but John L. Lewis, Sidney Hillman and their associates. The Communist Party's share of the responsibility for this situation is clear. During the ferment of 1933-34, "third-period" strategists like Browder denounced the A. F. of L. as "fascist." In its Seventh Convention thesis, in 1930, the Communist Party stated: "It has been a mistake on our part that we did not sooner clearly analyze and characterize the open fascism of the American Federation of Labor." The Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the I.L.G.W.U. were stigmatized as "company unions." The result was inevitably to stultify the left wing.

The Socialist Party too, is paying dearly, even though for the very different policy of "non-interference." The kaleidoscopic developments since the San Francisco convention of the A. F. of L. should urge the party on to wipe out every vestige of this policy that made it so often in the past a tail-end of the trade union bureaucracy. To maintain a laissez-faire attitude in regard to the trade unions would be to foster a purely parliamentarian conception of the role of the party. In the circumstances of the American crisis, industrial unionism is bound to release pent-up energies of the class struggle. It will mean more than just a structural reform. Trade unionism doesn't exist in a vacuum, nor is it the closed mystery of some specialists. It confronts the problems of unemployment, speed-up, Jim Crow, the Courts, the police, the Government. It touches politics, economics, and technology at every turn. The political "neutrality" of the free trade unions of Germany,

them to the electrical workers' union. Loggers, lumbermen and saw mill workers were ordered to join the carpenters' union. The demand of the shipyard workers for an industrial organization was likewise disregarded. In a word, no doubt was left that the craft officialdom was determined to keep the A. F. of L., with its membership of slightly over three out of thirty million American workers, the preserve of the aristocracy of labor.

After Atlantic City, there was only one conclusion. Those who were vitally interested in organization would have to take the initiative themselves. Green, Tobin of the Teamsters, Hutcheson who hasn't called a convention of the carpenters for seven years, Woll the former luminary of the National Civic Federation, and others, had already frustrated the magnificent opportunity of 1933. In 1933 when their hopes had been stirred by section 7a, the forward-surging masses could have been organized for the asking. By an aggressive campaign, the miners' union which prior to the NRA had dropped to 150,000 increased its membership to half a million. But in 1934 Tobin referred to the textile workers in the South as "riff-raff." Incredible though it may sound, Green actually ordered his organizers to sabotage the organization of the workers in the electrical and automotive industries.

The United Automobile, Aircraft and Vehicle Workers Union, organized in 1921 as an industrial union, had been undermined when the Federation attempted to divide it on craft lines. The possibilities of a fresh drive in the industry were ruined in 1926 when the craft internationals refused even temporarily to waive jurisdiction over skilled workers. When in the latter part of 1933, the New Deal unloosed a wave of struggle and there were close to 150,000 workers in the Federal locals of the A. F. of L., the bureaucracy put over the sell-out settlement of March 1934. The Roosevelt-Wolman "merit" and "proportional representation" provisions of that settlement were a direct blow at genuine unionism and led thousands of outraged and disappointed workers to tear up their cards. If space permitted a not dissimilar story could be told of the dereliction of the Executive Council in relation to the rubber industry. If there are 2,500,000 workers in the bondage of the company unions to-day, the responsibility must be largely shared by the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. and its craft policies.

The Crucial Test Is Steel

Steel, the basic metal of the machine age, represents the greatest instance of concentrated capitalist industrial power in the United States. In this industry the worker's productivity has increased three and a half times faster than his means to consume. The significance of steel for the organization of the workers in the mass production industries is self-evident. But what has the A. F. of L. accomplished? Whatever possible chance the Foster-managed organization drive of 1919 might have had of succeeding, was ruined by the jurisdictional disputes and per capita lust of the international officials. What makes the action of the Executive Council particularly criminal now is that having failed itself, it seeks zealously to break the force of the CIO's campaign. The Steel Institute, the most ruthless and powerful open shop organization in the country, openly preparing to resort to civil war, finds a virtual ally in the bureaucracy of the A. F. of L.

Nevertheless, all indications point to

Austria, and Italy did not save them from painful liquidation at the hands of the fascists. If the Socialist Party doesn't intervene, others will.

The socialist support of the CIO, though for that reason none the less effective in action, cannot afford to be uncritical. Industrial unionism may become a dynamic force. But it must not be overlooked that the men at the head of the CIO are not our leaders, nor of our party, nor do they share our philosophy. They would be the first to admit that they were conscious reformists. To them industrial unionism is a more adequate basis for collective bargaining within the frame-work of capitalism. Their outlook is that of class collaboration. They thoroughly believe in the stabilization of industry through the medium of governmental regulation, and in a social program that is some form of the NRA.

These limitations of the CIO leadership are revealed beyond doubt in their endorsement of President Roosevelt as the alleged bulwark of democracy. The Non-Partisan Leage promises to go about establishing a Labor Party in the future. Any Labor Party headed by Lewis and Hillman, it may be confidently predicted, will be what Major Berry calls a liberal party. It will take its stand firmly for bourgeois democracy and social reformism. The American Labor Party, New York section of the Non-Partisan League, is the image of the future national Labor Party.

As socialists, our policy must be to strike our roots in the rank and file, to prepare the masses in the unions to grasp the links between the everyday struggle and the struggle for power. We must develop a leadership in the trade unions, which understands clearly the background of the world capitalist crisis, the decay of parliamentary democracy, the sources of fascism, and the drives of imperialist war. A strong, genuinely progressive and left wing must be the goal of every revolutionary militant in the trade unions. For that reason the organization, direction and discipline of our labor leagues in the trade unions must become one of the major pre-occupations of the party.

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The Scope of Marxian Theory

Sidney Hook

IN a recent book an English critic refers to Marxism as the opium of the socialist orthodox. If one examines what Marxism means to most socialist and communist parties throughout the world to-day, i.e., to those which *profess* themselves Marxist, it will be found that the characterization is quite apt. For a variety of reasons, "orthodox" Marxists, and particularly communists, have turned Marxism into a philosophy of the universe relevant to every domain of knowledge and every field of human activity. From the movement of planets and electrons in their orbits, to the action of classes and parties no question has ever arisen upon which orthodox Marxists have not felt competent to speak. For after all, are not the laws of dialectic universal? Indeed, the analogy drawn in many quarters between orthodox Marxism and religion is unfair to religion, for most contemporary religions, in their ideology at least, restrict themselves to half-hearted affirmations of ethical ideals. One must go back to the great traditional religions to find anything which matches orthodox Marxism in the pretension of its claims, and in the intensity with which a monistic world-view is asserted.

It is easy to deny that Marxism is a systematic doctrine of the universe, society and man, and not very difficult to show that such interpretations rest upon a neglect of the context and intent of Marx's own writings. It is not so easy, however, to define adequately the scope of Marxian theory and to distinguish it on the one hand, from a cosmic religious opiate, and on the other, from the narrow view that Marxism is nothing but a set of economic doctrines. I shall try to sketch briefly what I regard the legitimate province of Marxism to be without at this time discussing or evaluating any of Marx's specific doctrines or conclusions.

If a man's life has any connection with his thought, then Marx's revolutionary activity should provide the clue to the central purpose of his thinking. Whatever Marxism may mean to the disciples, there can be no question but that to Marx it meant the theory and practice of the proletarian revolution. Every one of his doctrines was a generalization of an historic experience in the class struggle or a proposed solution of some problem in that struggle. I propose frankly to take the defining purpose of Marx's life and thought as the point of departure for determining the scope of Marxian theory. Without such a point of departure we have no way of determining what is directly relevant, what is peripheral, and what is irrelevant to Marxism and run the danger of talking *ins Blau hinein* or narrowing Marxism to some special doctrine.

If Marxism is the theory and practice of social revolution in capitalist society, then its first consideration must be a persistent and critical survey of all the social and political factors which affect the possibilities of successful political action. Obstacles to the achievement of our ends are always experienced as the

most relevant and pressing factors, and the chief obstacle to the realization of the proletarian revolution, it is obvious, is the existence of the state power and apparatus. Consequently one of the prime concerns of Marxism is the theory and practice of the state, its overt and hidden role in the class struggle, the social and economic factors which influence at different times its form, expression and ideology. Historically it is interesting to know that in his critical reaction against Hegel's philosophy of law, it was the Hegelian theory of the state which Marx overthrew first. The initial impulse to question the Hegelian theory was derived from first hand observations of the way in which the state *functioned* in relation to the German problems of freedom of education, freedom of press, provision for the poor, and, later, in the weavers' revolts. (In passing, we must note that the traditional German social-democratic emasculation of Marx—now shared by the Communist Party—lies precisely in its unrealistic approach to the question of state power.) If the state is, as Marx held, the executive committee of the ruling class—and this must always be shown by an analysis of legislative practices, the use of executive power, judicial decisions, etc.—then no working-class party can share the existing political power, or once establish as a government, tolerate the existence of the old state machinery without abandoning the standpoint of the class struggle, or rather the class struggle from the point of view of proletarian interests and the proletarian revolution.

Now although the nature of the state structure and function is always important, it becomes *focally* important only in a period when the question of the conquest of power is on the order of the day. The precise instrumentalities to be employed, peaceful or not, are functions of the concrete historical situation and depend just as much upon what opponents of Marxism do as upon the intelligence of Marxists. But antecedent to the attempted conquest of power, one must develop a working conception of the social conditions under which such an attempt can be made, and conditions under which such an attempt can *succeed*. It is the failure to do this which distinguished Blanquism from Marxism. For Blanquism a social revolution is a live possibility at any time and place; for Marxism the revolution is the critical point in a social process which must first be understood before the final action which actualizes it can be launched. Here again Marx's own experience is vitally reflected in the development of Marx's thought. After the defeat of the revolution of 1848 Marx devoted himself to the great task of discovering the laws and tendencies of capitalist production in order to determine not only the reasons for the failure of the revolution but the perspectives of future political action. The economic doctrines of Marx in their specific Marxian form were projected as integral parts of the central problems of the coming social revolution and not merely as the formal equations of doom of capitalist society. They indicated the nature and periodic rhythms of capitalist decline, how the objective conditions of the new social order are generated by the imminent processes of the old, and why the working class must be the base of the socialist revolution and not some other class. This knowledge, scorned by the impatient revolutionists of the Blanquist stripe, became essential to realistic political action. Indeed the kind of economics in which the Marxist is interested, why and what he

selects out of the infinite complexity of available data, can only be explained in terms of a contemplated *program of action* which he checks and modifies in its light. Whether Marx's economic predictions have been realized, and whether if they have been realized the logical analysis by which he arrived at them is valid, are questions which do not concern us in this context.

But now it must be observed that knowledge of economic tendencies although essential to revolutionary action is not sufficient. If the economic factors were the *only* ones that counted, the social revolution in the western world would have occurred long ago. So long as history is made by men, their sentiments, passions, traditions and religious allegiances—conditioned as they may be by economic causes—have an influence upon social development which cannot be reduced to, or intelligibly explained in, economic terms. The economic analysis may show that some things are impossible: by itself, however, it cannot establish the fact that any thing *must* be. From the point of view of the revolutionary process and the revolutionary act, the Marxist must take into account all those—to use one synoptic term— *"psychological"* factors which bear upon the conquest of political power.

Theoretically and practically, the most serious failures of Marxism have arisen from inability to evaluate properly extra-economic factors which bear upon the problems of political power. Indeed, out of a self-imposed intellectual terror most Marxists have feared to introduce and interpret other factors, for fear of falling into revisionism. Instead they have either denied the efficacy of these factors or have sought to reduce them to economic terms. After all, economic facts are more or less measurable while traditions, national and religious feelings are not. And a mistaken theory of science which has held that only what is measurable can be scientifically treated has been even more confused by a mistaken philosophy which holds that only what can be scientifically treated exists. But nationalism and fascism indicate that it is possible to measure poverty, and yet not be able to measure its political effects; that it is possible to establish statistically the decline of capitalism and yet be unable to predict on that data alone the quality, expression and direction of the resentment which the decline generates.

The view that economic realities *alone* are the guide to understanding and action is not Marxian and leads to a vulgarization of Marx's theory of historical materialism. All ideals are viewed as a form of self-interest and it is presupposed that every one knows what his real interests are. Such a theory of motivation, however, is patently inadequate to the facts of the class-struggle and especially to the activity, heroism and sacrifice of the most revolutionary elements within it. The simple truth which Marx stressed against the Utopians that ideals and values cannot be pursued for long by men who have no bread has been converted into the proposition that all ideals and values are merely the instruments by which bread is secured. An adequate statement of Marxism must reassert those larger ideals which were so much a part of the socialist movement of his time that Marx did not regard it as necessary to make them explicit. It is all the more necessary to do this in view of the newer movements which have arisen which seek to catch men's enthusiasm for causes that threaten the very existence of civilization.

The whole question becomes clearer

if we go back to our starting point to complete the definition of Marxism as the theory and practice of proletarian revolution. It is clear that the proletarian revolution or the conquest of power is not an end in itself. It is the use to which political power is to be put which constitutes its justification. It is the conception of a society in which the assurance of material plenty makes possible the greatest realization of those ideal goods which the seers, prophets and philosophers have taught to be the constituents of the good life and the good society—intelligence, courage, humanity and creative activity. Of course these are terms which the Marxian analysis has shown to be differently interpreted in different times by different classes. But they have an unchanging nucleus of meaning to which the nature of man in society, especially in conflict, always responds. There is nothing incompatible with Marxism in coupling together these larger ideals with specific economic interests and motivations, the multitude of short time levers by which the revolutionary movement advances. Without these larger ideals it is unlikely that people will stake their lives and fortunes in struggle; without these ideals the argument that in liberating itself, the working class liberates the whole of society, cannot be plausibly sustained. That is why Marxism is something more than a matter of social engineering, something more than a cut and dried method by which a group of intellectuals calling themselves social-engineers puts the revolution over by using the working class as so much material or so much energy in an engineering construction. Those whose Marxist consciences are uneasy and who ask for the sacred texts on this point can be supplied with them. But it is not a question of texts; it is a question of what is implied in the recognition that a revolution, as Marx understood it, is not an end in itself but a means of achieving Socialism; it is a question of what the Marxists must oppose to the Nazi hosts whose unctuous idealism, compounded of passionate lies, illusions and mythology as it may be, is demogogically effective because it is based on the insight that man cannot live and be moved by negations alone.

Another point which must be stressed today is the essentially democratic character of Socialism as Marx conceived it. By the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" (used only twice in print) Marx understood a workers' democracy, administered by representative councils of *all* producers, functioning repressively against minority groups only when the latter are guilty of overt action. Marx emphatically did not mean by the "dictatorship of the proletariat" a dictatorship of a minority political party enjoying a monopoly of political power, and permitting only that degree of freedom to citizen-producers which insures the perpetuation of its own hegemony.

We now come to the problem of Marxism and culture. The Marxian attitude to any given culture complex is twofold. On the one hand, the Marxist seeks evidence for the hypothesis that the fundamental social relations of production influence the character, extent and development of cultural activity: on the other, he seeks to reveal and oppose the manifold ways in which different tendencies in culture create the psychological blockages,—emotional attitudes and intellectual habits—that stand in the way of revolutionizing the masses. His attitude to existing culture is, therefore, essentially critical. He is always asking: whom does this serve? What are

the social consequences of this cultural pattern or text? In what way does this method of interpreting life and experience bear upon working class activity? In making inquiries of this kind it is not the function of the Marxist under capitalism to *create* a culture *de novo*. This does not of course deny that the movement produces a characteristic culture of revolt in song, literature and social thought. But this is something quite different from the attitude taken by orthodox dialectical materialists in Russia and the official Communist Parties of the world who try to apply some mythical party line in evaluating the validity of doctrine and technical achievement in all fields. Such an attitude presupposes that every aspect of culture from the theory of numbers to the science of philology is equally relevant to the class-struggle; something which only a cultural barbarian could assert. To be sure, the Marxist critically examines the findings of modern science, not to lay down the mumbo-jumbo formulae or laws of the "yes-no" dialectical logic to the scientist, but merely to expose and oppose the illegitimate excursions of the doctrines of the physical sciences into social affairs. He shows, for example, that, although the biological premises of Conklin, Osborn and other geneticists with reactionary political penchants, may be true, their social views, presumably based upon these premises, are elaborate *non-sequiturs*. He lays bare the peculiar mystical philosophy and obscurantism which leads Eddington and Jeans into claiming that the jump of electrons from one atomic orbit to another establishes the existence of free will: he does not, as some orthodox dialectical materialists have done, maintain that these electronic jumps furnish an additional argument for social *revolution* as against continuous social evolution.

The dangers of trying to determine what the correct point of view in *all* fields of culture must be on the basis of correct political lines are best illustrated in the intellectual debacle of orthodox Marxism in the field of anthropology. Here orthodox Marxists still cling to Morgan's anthropology almost every one of whose leading ideas has been decisively rejected by the scientific field workers. Indeed, had Marxists familiarized themselves with, and disseminated, the critical findings of the American school of anthropologists on the nature of race, with half the zealousness with which they propagated Morgan's outworn views, the Nazi mythology of race would not have taken hold so easily in Germany and elsewhere.

The Marxist tries to show how social conditions under capitalism, whatever the benefits of their initial impulse may have been, *now* exercise a distorting effect upon most cultural activity. He uses as an additional argument for the classless society, the freedom which the physicist, mathematician or musician can enjoy to work out his own problems undisturbed by the impact of irrelevant economic obstacles or difficulties. That is to say, the intellectual and artist can work either in conjunction with those who are active in the organization of production or pursue his own theoretical bent once his competence is established. But in either case voluntarily. From this point of view, the Marxist can contend that he is interested in preserving all genuine culture and in providing the social milieu in which a new culture—class or class-less—so long as it be rich in meaning and diversified in form, can flourish.

It follows from the foregoing that Marxism is not a complete system of sociology and certainly not exclusively an economic doctrine. All of its propositions have a specific historic context and presupposition. That is why both Marx and Engels always insisted upon the historical character of their leading principles, viz: the class struggle, historical materialism and theory of value. Their abstract generalizations once divorced from the concrete situations of social life today are either meaningless or quite definitely false. This account of the meaning of Marxian theory makes intelligible the role which Marx assigned to the political party in educating, organizing and leading the masses, and in supplying a principle of continuity in the vicissitudes of struggle. It also makes intelligible why the Marxian theory itself can function as an historical force. In other words, it recognizes that knowledge and intelligence make a difference —which is indeed no more than a direct, but sadly overlooked implication, of the doctrine of the unity between theory and practice. This is a far cry from the customary fatalism read into Marxist theory by most of its friends and foes. If knowledge and intelligence make a difference, then any form of dogma whether it be expressed as *a priori* rationalism or voluntaristic irrationalism must be ruled out as foreign to the spirit of Marxian theory. And to those who feel that this account lacks the simplicity and assurance of certainty necessary to bring people into motion, it can easily be demonstrated that a recognition of the complexity of the social and historical process and the tentative character of the conclusions reached is not at all incompatible with resolute action in behalf of goals chosen after reflection.

Consumers Cooperation, a Neglected Socialist Weapon

Benjamin Wolf

WE who are in the vanguard against the terror of fascism have an ever-present duty to prepare our comrades for the coming struggle and hearten them by effective leadership. We cannot afford to neglect a single front upon which our forces are pressed lest it prove to be an Achilles heel. One such front, a large and important front, is the working class consumer front.

The function of consumption is a most important aspect of capitalism. It is to the consumer market that capitalism points. It was because capitalism was supposed to be best able to supply that market with abundance that capitaist economists praised and supported it above all other systems. Yet capitalism, depending as it does upon the profit motive, has brought untold misery and exploitation in its wake, and has utterly failed of its objective, abundance for all. In this mad quest for profit, there has arisen a sharp division of interests between the workers who produce wealth and the capitalists who exist on profit. A greater share for one has meant a corresponding loss for the other.

Being accustomed to think of this struggle in terms of the workers and

the capitalists, we have overlooked the consumers. The nature of capitalism is such that the possibility of exploitation is not restricted to the productive function of the working class. The consumative function is also capable of exploitation equally extensive and vicious. The pressure of working class organization about its productive function, such as trade union, serves to shift capitalist exploitation to the consumer. This is, however, not a shift of exploitation from one class to another. It can be demonstrated that the consumer and the producer are one and the same and that the shift is merely one of direction rather than of substitution.

In one sense every person is a consumer. To live, it is necessary to consume. Yet, there is an obvious difference between the consumer with more than $10,000 a year to spend and the sharecropper whose income may be less than $100 a year. There is the same lack of security, freedom and liberty as that which distinguishes the worker from the capitalist. The want of sufficient purchasing power means no security, freedom or liberty at all. The basis of difference between the two classes of consumers lies in how much of the purchasing power of each must be expended in the consumption of the vitally necessary products. Only that class which must spend all or most of its purching power upon goods necessary for the preservation of life upon the minimum standard of health and decency gives signficance to the name "consumer."

The economists of the United States Department of Labor tell us that $2,000 a year for a family of four is the income necessary to maintain the minimum standard of health and decency. Today, more than eighty percent of the people of this country live at or below this standard. These hundred million people are the people whose incomes are wholly or mainly expended in the purchase of food and goods necessary to maintain life. They are the consumers. Their restricted purchasing power is an aspect of their restricted wage income. The consumer is the worker's other self.

If the consumer and the worker are identical, we must understand capitalist exploitation as even more vicious than we heretofore supposed. It can oppress the working class through two avenues of exploitation, through production and through consumption. To the worker the latter is less apparent but nevertheless it is equally as extensive and as vicious. It is easier for workers to become aware of exploitation in production. In consumption, the exploitation is broken up into many petty extortions. The storekeeper, landlord, public utility and others diffuse the responsibility so that it is less apparent. Consumative exploitation is particularly vicious in that workers unorganized as consumers pay for the concession won by workers organized as producers.

The exploitation of the consumer is as extensive and of much the same tenor as that to which the worker as producer is subject. It takes place in every aspect of his life, financial, physical and mental. The consumer suffers financially from high prices. He pays increasingly more for the goods he purchases and gets increasingly less in quality and amount. His health and physical well-being is affected by adulterations, shoddiness, lack of safety precautions and downright poisonings. Cases are legion in which consumers have died of arsenic poisoning, the accumulated effect of eating fruit and vegetables sprayed with "harmless" insecticides. Mentally, the consumer faces a barrage of confusing and

fraudulent advertising, the absence of opportunities for intelligent class recreation and a general onslaught of escapist propaganda. The profit system takes huge toll from the pocket, body and mind of the consumer as well as from the producer.

If the exploitation of consumers is a pressing problem for the working class, it can be solved only by organization. It is important, however, that the form of organization be as extensive as the exploitation and that it be designed for effective action. What are the possible forms of organization?

There are the research oragnizations such as Consumers Research (anti-labor) and the Consumers Union (pro-labor). Their function is to hunt out and expose specific items of exploitation. They seek to educate the masses to intelligent consumption. Yet the more they expose, the less effective they become. As their warnings and recommendations accumulate, it becomes increasingly difficult for workers to remember them. There are other faults. They do not provide an alternative to profit made goods. They depend upon individual action for results rather than upon organization. They are at best only a small, if important, part of a model consumers' front.

Consumer strikes and boycotts have been suggested as a means of organization. This type of action is effective only in a limited way. Consumers can be rallied to strike against only the most flagrant abuses, and then for only a short time. Consumer strikes and boycotts are not sustained. They do not strike at the root of the evil, production and distribution for profit. They lack organizational cohesion. Their most effective work has been in assisting the better publicized strikes.

Some seek by individual action to protect the consumer. These self-appointed representatives of the consumer and consumer lobbyists do not present an organized approach. Nor is governmental regulation desirable. Under capitalist control government bodies set up to protect the consumer are about as effective and desirable as those set up to protect the worker.

The only form of organization that offers a well-knit, complete and effective program for the consumer is the consumers' cooperative movement.

In England we have a striking example of how cooperatives hit high prices. In 1934, the retail trade of English cooperatives amounted to over one billion dollars. Despite the fact that in no case did any cooperative sell above the market price and in many cases actually set the price at a lower level, patronage dividends amounted to over $120,000,000, or 12%. Every 88 cents spent in the English "co-ops" was equal to a dollar spent in private shops. In family income this was equivalent to a 12% raise in wages.

The story of the Swedish cooperative movement is a story of effective trust busting and of low cost, high grade housing. The Swedes smashed the international electric lamp kartel, among others. Through cooperative effort, proportionately more pig pens are illuminated by electricity in Sweden than farmhouses in America.

The story of Danish cooperation is the story of victory against the farm tenancy and share cropping. In Belgium, cooperatives solved the problem of cheap, wholesome, class-conscious recreation for workers by means of their "Houses of the People."

By eliminating the profit motive cooperation reduces prices, avoids frauds,

adulteration and shoddiness. It provides a real choice between the abuses of capitalism and an intelligent, efficient and practical system of distribution. It fights on every front in which the consumer is exploited.

It is not the purpose of this article to explain in detail how the cooperative movement works. It is important, however, to consider whether the cooperative movement fits the broader workers' movement and whether there are conflicts that cannot be resolved.

Cooperatives have tended, in the main, towards higher wages and better conditions than those prevailing in competing capitalist businesses. Cooperatives recognize the right of their employees to organize as a cardinal principle. The cooperative movement, however, is an employer of labor, and therefore may exploit labor. In fact, there are instances of strikes among cooperative employes. They are not, however, necessarily an indictment of cooperation. The movement has its share of shortsighted people who regard the consumers and workers as different classes. We must judge cooperation as we judge capitalism and Socialism, by its aims and tendencies rather than its perversions. Cooperatives tend to eliminate exploitation of labor, because, having ruled out the profit motive, a great incentive to drive workers is gone. Moreover, cooperatives are based on a membership derived from the working class. The efficiency of cooperatives make it possible for them to pay higher wages than capitalist organizations. The executives of even the largest cooperatives get quite modest salaries, and much less is spent for advertising. Being a social and educational movement besides an economic movement makes high pressure advertising unnecessary. The Economic Research Committee of the International Cooperative Alliance reported that in Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland cooperatives were operating at a distributive cost of 11% to 13% while privately owned stores were operating at 18% to 21%.

There is a more significant aspect of the relationship between the two movements. Cooperatives can and should be the commissaries of the army of labor. They can provide food, clothing and shelter for striking workers. They can effectively boycott capitalists who are on the "Unfair to Labor" lists. By the very strength of its organized purchasing power, cooperatives can force unionization upon the capitalists from whom they purchase their goods.

Cooperatives offer many other advantages to the workers' movement. They are an effective educational force for Socialism, by showing the consumer the strength and power of solidarity. They demonstrate the futility of individual action and the efficiency of collective action. The consumer sees in the cooperative the abuses of the profit system graphically contrasted. He learns, in concrete fashion, from the price and quality of his bread and clothing, what production and distribution for use mean. Such experience lifts socialist concepts out of the realm of abstraction and makes them visible and tangible. Cooperation leads logically to the establishment of the Cooperative Commonwealth, and consequently, unless it wishes to stop short, must identify itself with the socialist movement. A consumer who accepts the logic of cooperation is ready to listen to the fuller message of Socialism.

Powerful and attractive though the logic and ideal of cooperation may be, there is yet a more powerful force which will move the cooperative leftward, the

economic pressure of their radical position. Although some will proclaim, for some time to come, that they are not "reds" and that their movement is consistent with capitalism, they will fool no one, least of all the capitalists who find them poaching on their domain. No matter how they disdain the class struggle, they will find themselves forced to take sides with their other comrades of the working class.

Cooperatives carry on extensive educational campaigns. In Denmark and Sweden they publish hundreds of newspapers, books and magazines. Every successful cooperative movement has its own colleges and schools. They can operate their own radio stations or buy time on the air. Imagine a workers' movement with adequate financing!

In the cooperative movement, the Socialist Party will find one of its most fertile fields for converts and members. Thousands upon thousands of the underprivileged have been flocking to the cooperative movement. It has already become a mass movement with which the Socialist Party must be identified. Socialism must be taught to cooperators within their own organization, not from the outside. Unless the Socialist Party does this, we will find these people won over to a muddled leadership which proclaims cooperation a panacea and an alternative to Socialism.

Cooperation is an instrument not only of pre-revolutionary education and amelioration, but also of post-revolutionary construction. When we build the socialist state we shall need workers and executives trained to conduct non-profit business. Such training should not come after we have come to power. The support of public opinion will depend upon how well we succeed in our task even from the very beginning.

In the socialist state itself, consumers cooperation will be found to be an efficient and desirable means of distribution. It can ascertain the wants and desires of consumers more readily and satisfactorily than bureaucratic state stores. Such at least has been the experience in the Soviet-Russia. *

The cooperatives are no safeguard against fascism, but they are distinctly a force working against fascism. Alone they will not be able to resist a fascist dictatorship. There are no safeguards against fascism except the combined force of many pro-labor mass organizatons under the banner of Socialism. Such a combination of trade unions, cooperatives, farm, youth, educational and other organizations under the leadership of Socialism is more truly a People's Front against fascism than any political alliance. In America there are already more than two million cooperators to whom fascism looms as a threat. Most of them are completely isolated from the propaganda of any progressive force except their cooperative. Certainly the voices and opinions of two million cooperators must be thrown into the balance. The Socialist Party must have a hand in the shaping of those opinions.

There is an aspect of the cooperative movement which is often overlooked. Every dollar of cooperative business is won away from capitalist business. This amounts to a transfusion from the bloodstreams of capital to that of the working class. It is not insignificant that in Sweden where cooperation, trade unionism and Social Democracy are most ad-

*—"To organize, with exact regularity, a daily distribution, among the whole body of consumers, of the innumerable commodities they desire, is a task of immense magnitude and difficulty, calling for its own district administration. Before assuming power, Lenin saw clearly and confidently, that this task would have to be undertaken by the consumer's cooperation with a membership becoming universal."——

—Beatrice and Sidney Webb, "Soviet Communism", page 304.

vanced, fascism has failed to make much headway.

The success of a Farmer-Labor Party depends to a large extent on whether it is supported by the cooperative movement. To the progressive farmer, the marketing cooperative is his trade union. Through it he fights for a greater return for his labor. Because of the bicameral legislature of this country wherein the farmer has been assured more than his proportionate representation, no Farmer-Labor Party can succeed without the support of the progressive farm vote, coralled in the marketing cooperatives.

There seems to be no field of socialist work that would not profit by participation in the cooperative movement. We need only to brush aside the extravagant claim made for the movement and view it in its proper perspective, to realize how important it is as an integral part of the labor movement.

Cooperation has its shortcomings. It it not an efficient revolutionary instrument. It has no weapon as quick and powerful as the general strike, nor as influential as political control. It tends, with success, to become conservative and maintain the status quo. It denies the need of the class struggle as a tactic. Its leaders, at least those in America, assert that cooperation is merely supplementary to, rather than a substitute for, capitalism.

Yet despite the shortcomings, cooperation must nevertheless be considered an important socialist weapon because it is a mass movement of the underprivileged, based upon the inarticulate major premise that the profit motive can never create a just and humane society. It is the task of socialists to make that premise articulate by active participation in their organization, management and direction.

The Constitution and the Supreme Court

Louis B. Boudin

THE pivot of our governmental system is the U. S. Supreme Court, and any discussion of this system must begin with the relation of the practice of the Supreme Court to the written word of the Constitution. This is perhaps best expressed in Chief Justice Hughes' well-known statement to the effect that we have a constitution *but the Supreme Court says what it is.* And since there is no appeal from the decisions of the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court is in the position of the autocrats of old who were responsible to no one but to their conscience and their God. Mr. Justice Stone has said that much in one of his recent dissents. And no one, not even the most ardent supporter of the Supreme Court will dare contradict that. The basis of the Supreme Court's absolutism is the extraordinary power,—extraordinary in the sense that it is not known in any other system of government, and is not possessed by any other court on earth,—of declaring the laws of its own government null and void.

The question how the Supreme Court "got that way" is a very interesting one, which I have discussed at great length in my *Government by Judiciary,* and cannot, naturally, be discussed at any

length in a brief magazine article. However, the result of my investigations and the elaborate discussion in *Government by Judiciary* must be given here, because this is the starting point of the most pressing problem before the people of the United States today, and no practical solution can be arrived at unless we inquire into the sources of the power of the Supreme Court. Briefly stated, the situation is as follows:

No one claims that the power has been expressly given to the Supreme Court by the Constitution, but some people claim that it follows as a logical conclusion from the fact that we have a federal system of government. This was the position of John Marshall. This position has, however, been abandoned by most writers on the subject, including most conservative writers of any standing, because of its logical inadequacy, and particularly because it has been refuted by the practice of mankind since the argument was first made by John Marshall in 1803. The "modern doctrine," that is the doctrine of the intelligent supporters of the court in the past fifty years or so, is to the effect that although neither expressly given by the Constitution nor a necessary corollary of our federal system, it was nevertheless intended by the Framers that the Supreme Court should exercise the power. They did not insert it because they assumed that it would be exercised even though not expressly given, and did not attempt to give it expressly for fear that it would assure opposition. The Framers had a right to assume that the power would be exercised because, so it is claimed, it was actually being exercised by the state courts between the Declaration of Independence and the framing of the Constitution. We need not discuss here the question whether or not a power is properly used when, concededly, it would have endangered the adoption of the Constitution, if it had been expressly included therein, because, as I have demonstrated conclusively in my *Government by Judiciary*, that the historical basis for this assertion is entirely lacking. The result of these investigations is that the Supreme Court has "assumed" or "usurped" the power. So far as I am concerned it makes no difference which word is used, as I am not interested in the moral aspect of the problem but in the political. And in so far as the political side of it is concerned, the only important fact is that it is not in the Constitution and was never intended by the Framers or by the people who adopted the Constitution that it should be there.

The next question to be considered is that of the use made of its power by the Supreme Court. That, too, must be touched upon only briefly here. I must refer those readers who want to study the subject thoroughly to my elaborate discussion of the subject in *Government by Judiciary*. On this point the all-important fact to be remembered is that while nominally the Supreme Court in its decisions "interprets" the Constitution, in reality it is *continuously making a new constitution*, changing it and re-changing it at will, so that its will is, in fact, the Constitution. It may be stated baldly that the actual decisions, in the vast majority of cases, and in the most important cases at that, have no relevancy whatever to the actual words of the Constitution. In many cases the text of the Constitution is not even mentioned. In others it is brought in only perfunctorily, much in the manner that preachers take a text from the scriptures for their sermons. For instance: The A.A.A. involved the

question of taxation. No one disputed the power of Congress to lay the tax in question as a tax. But it was claimed that this tax had a particular purpose, and unless the purpose was proper the tax could not be laid. There is no such limitation in the Constitution, but we may pass that for the moment, and inquire into the question why the purpose of this tax was deemed to be improper. As to that, the Supreme Court said that the impropriety was due to the fact that it was used for the purpose of regulating agriculture, and the regulation of agriculture belongs to the state. There is nothing about that in the Constitution either, and the assertion was made on the basis of the 10th Amendment which says that the powers which are not granted to the federal government belong to the states. And, said the Supreme Court, the power to regulate agriculture was not granted to the federal government. But the Supreme Court itself, under the leadership of the great Marshall, has held that the federal government may exercise powers which were not expressly granted, because the Constitution contains the express provision that Congress may make all laws which may be necessary or proper for the purpose of carrying out any power granted therein. The question, therefore, resolves itself into what is "necessary or proper," and the Supreme Court decides that question. But that question depends on one's political and economic views, as every intelligent man must admit, and as the Supreme Court has frequently admitted. So that in the last analysis, the question is not what the Constitution says, but what the Supreme Court, or a majority of the Judges, think is a proper or necessary law under what they conceive to be the "spirit" of our government. It is clear that the text of the Constitution has much less to do with the actual decision than the biblical text has to do with the sermons preached by the preachers.

Both questions just considered are important on the question of amending the Constitution,—the first on the question of whether or not we need an amendment to the Constitution in order to take away the power of the Supreme Court to declare laws unconstitutional, and the other on the question of whether or not we need, or it would be advisable to get, an amendment to the Constitution giving Congress the powers which the Supreme Court says it has not got. My answer to both of these questions is an emphatic NO, for reasons which will appear further below.

Before proceeding to discuss this all-important practical question, some attention must be given to the question whether or not the power which the Supreme Court is actually exercising over legislation is not somehow needed for the protection of "civil" or other minority rights. Of late much has been made of this argument by the supporters of the Judicial Power. Senator Borah, one of our great "liberal" reactionaries, in a most fervent address delivered recently in defense of the Supreme Court, put this argument very eloquently:

> "Or suppose that they pass a law curtailing the right of free speech and you are undertaking to address a public gathering—, and if there is anything in the world that a dictator hates, it is free speech—and suppose while you are addressing your neighbors and advising them of the injustice of this or that sort of policy you are sent to jail, how are you going to get out? By an appeal to the tribunal of the U. S. which has the power to say that the supreme law of the land the people have made, controls and not an act of Congress."

The answer to this eloquent plea is

very simple: *Never in its entire history has the United States Supreme Court declared any law of Congress unconstitutional for alleged violation of the right of free speech, or any other civil right. On the other hand, the Supreme Court has declared unconstitutional important laws of Congress intended for the protection of the civil rights of the minorities. And by those decisions the Supreme Court has made it impossible for the federal government to protect the civil rights of minorities.*

I know that this, like most everything else that relates to the subject of the Constitution and the United Staets Supreme Court, is contrary to popular belief. It must be so, or else a man of standing like Senator Borah would not have dared make the statement quoted above. Whatever we may think or suspect of Senator Borah's honesty, clearly he is no fool. And he would have to be a great fool, indeed, to make the statement unless he was sure that the people did not know enough to know that he was telling an untruth or talking nonsense. Nevertheless, I make the foregoing statements without fear of contradiction and am ready to take up the challenge of any supporter of the Supreme Court from Mr. John W. Davis to Senator Borah, or anybody in between or on the fringe. But such is the power of the great propaganda machine which has been and is continually working on behalf of the Judicial Power that even very intelligent people, including many honest liberals, apparently believe what can easily be proven to be contrary to fact. This includes, I regret to say, some very good personal friends of mine, some of them good lawyers who ought to know better.

I naturally cannot here go into any lengthy discussion of this subject, but I doubt whether it requires one. As to the first question, namely, whether or not the United States Supreme Court has ever declared a law of Congress unconstitutional for alleged violation of civil rights, that is a simple question of fact which anybody can check up if he wants to. I invite such checking up, confident of the result. As to the second question, the story is written large in the decisions of the United States Supreme Court during the so-called Reconstruction period and some decisions since. The decisions on the Reconstruction period are discussed at considerable length in a special chapter devoted to the subject in my *Government by Judiciary*. I shall, however, give a brief summary of that discussion, because it has considerable to do with my opposition to constitutional amendments. The story is briefly this:

As the Constitution left the hands of the Framers and was adopted by the people of the several states it did not contain any Bill of Rights. Senator Borah's plea cannot, therefore, be made to the original Constitution. The so-called Bill of Rights, meaning the first ten amendments, was, however, adopted shortly after the Constitution itself had been adopted and the federal government set up thereunder, and needs, of course, now to be taken into consideration. The Supreme Court, however, at a very early date held that these ten amendments are a check upon the action of the federal government only and not upon the states. A state could therefore deprive a man of his right of free speech and of all of his other civil rights notwithstanding the existence of a Bill of Rights in the federal Constitution. As a practical matter, therefore, the Bill of Rights appended to the Constitution meant very little to the people at large,

particularly to the minorities,—as their rights could very effectively be taken away by the states notwithstanding the existence of the federal Constitution and its Bill of Rights. The condition that Mr. Borah pictured so eloquently could therefore happen notwithstanding the existence of the power of the Supreme Court to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional, because such a condition could be brought about, and frequently was brought about, without any act of Congress.

Surely, those who are familiar with conditions throughout this broad, free land today know that the civil rights of large minorities, particularly of the working class, are being taken away continuously without act of Congress. As a matter of fact, however, Congress twice did pass legislation substantially invading the rights of free speech and other civil liberties,—once in 1798 by means of the so-called Sedition Law, and again during the World War by means of the so-called Espionage Law. But contrary to Mr. Borah's assurances the Supreme Court did not spring to the defense of these rights. Nor did any other court. As a matter of fact both the Sedition Law and the Espionage Law were held constitutional by the courts, the latter by the Supreme Court itself. It is significant in this connection that the consensus of opinion among historians now is that the Sedition Law, at least, was clearly unconstitutional. *But no court ever said so.* And the only way in which we did actually get rid of it was by the means provided in the Constitution itself, namely, by *repeal.* The moral of this historical fact is two-fold: A court will not declare unconstitutional a law invading civil rights so long as the law is popular, and when the law ceases to be popular there is no need of court action. To those who happen to know something about our history and happen to remember that our courts during the existence of the Alien and Sedition Law were manned by Federalists, which means in our present parlance reactionaries, it is a sufficient answer that the opinion of the United States Supreme Court declaring the validity and constitutionality of the Espionage Law was written by no less a liberal than Mr. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, and was concurred in by all the other Justices, reactionary as well as liberal.

Now let us look at the record of the United States Supreme Court on the affirmative side,—namely, in declaring *un*constitutional laws passed by Congress for the protection of civil rights. These laws I firmly believe to have been constitutional, and it would have been a scandal and disgrace to declare them unconstitutional even if the court rightfully had the power to do so.

The situation with respect to the power of the federal government to interfere on behalf of civil rights was changed radically by the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment, which specifically declared that Congress has the power to pass laws for the protection of the civil rights which the states were by that amendment prohibited to violate. As everyone knows, the Fourteenth Amendment was passed for the protection of the Negroes, then recently freed from slavery. But its langauge is broad enough to cover others, and that amendment would today be a great protection of civil rights but for the action of the United States Supreme Court in emasculating and perverting it. Under the power to legislate given by this amendment, Congress proceeded to enact various laws for the protection of the civil rights of Negroes, which rights were

most shamefully being trampled upon by Ku Kluxers and others. But the Supreme Court, in flagrant defiance of the express language of the constitutional amendment, held that Congress had no power to legislate for the protection of civil rights within the states, and that such protection must remain after the Fourteenth Amendment in the same condition that it was prior to the adoption of that amendment,—that is to say, left to the protection of the reactionary governments of the states where the Ku Klux organizations operate. The present situation throughout the South as well as in other parts of the country, notably Detroit and similar centers of reactionary capital, is the direct result of these decisions of the United States Supreme Court. It is a curious bit of irony and a sad reflection on the state of intelligence of our community, that noted liberals who are appealing to President Roosevelt to curb the operations of the Ku Klux and similar organizations, although this right to do so is doubtful or at least tenuous, at the same time spring to the defense of the power of the United States Supreme Court to declare laws unconstitutional for the fanciful reason that it is needed as the defender of the civil rights of minorities.

This brings us squarely to the question: What *are* we going to do about it? And this in turn depends on the question: What *can* we do about it? Some people say we *can* amend the Constitution, and *ought* to try to. In my opinion both of these propositions are wrong: As a matter of fact we cannot amend the Constitution, and as a matter of policy we ought not try to. The first half of my contention is proven by the history of this country: History shows that except through civil war the Constitution has never been amended in any fundamental respect where there were serious social or economic forces opposed to the amendment. The best proof is the proposed Child Labor Amendment. Every political platform, I believe, and certainly every public speaker and writer, is in favor of the abolition of child labor. And yet, the Child Labor Amendment has been pending for the last sixteen years and we are still nowhere. Imagine trying to amend the Constitution either by taking away the power of the courts to declare laws unconstitutional, which is the fundamental power of the capitalist class of this country, or to diminish that power by such a grant of power to Congress as would seriously hamper the United States Supreme Court in continuing to do what it is doing now! I give it as my deliberate opinion that a revolution,—even a revolution in the extreme form which it has taken in Russia,—can be accomplished sooner than the adoption of such an amendment.

That does not mean that I believe that the Social Revolution is around the corner. But it does mean that such constitutional amendment is centuries off,—on the impossible assumption, of course, that our social order can last that long. That is certainly true with respect to an amendment to take away the power of the courts to declare laws unconstitutional. And without such an amendment every other amendment would be worse than futile,—it would be positively dangerous. For, so long as the Supreme Court has the power to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional, *there is no way of telling in advance* what the Supreme Court would do with *any* amendment. And I say, after spending a lifetime in studying the subject, that no lawyer is clever enough so to phrase an amendment as to make it impossible for the courts to emasculate it, or even to

misuse it for different purposes. It is curious how our so-called Democrats forget the history of democracy, and the history of liberty, generally. A glance into that history will prove conclusively that a power from which there is no appeal becomes an absolute power. The history of what happened to our constitutional government is the best proof of it. It was intended as a government of three co-ordinate departments, but no one but a knave or a fool will say that we still live under such a government, and that the United States Supreme Court is not the ultimate and absolute ruler of this country. One does not have to be a radical to affirm the absoluteness of the Supreme Court's rule. On the contrary, judges of the United States Supreme Court have affirmed it frequently, and Mr. Justice Stone, with the concurrence of Justices Brandeis and Cardozo, did so only a few short months ago.

It is even more curious how some of our liberals have forgotten the history of the Fourteenth Amendment. All our woes so far as State legislation is concerned come from that amendment. In other words, the Fourteenth Amendment, which was intended for the protection of *civil rights does not protect those rights, but it does prevent the States from curbing abuses which they could curb but for that amendment.* Under these circumstances, I believe that only a malevolent or very ignorant person can advocate any amendment other than an amendment to take away the power of the Supreme Court to declare laws unconstitutional.

But why not at least advocate such an amendment? Aside from the fact that advocating of such an amendment only means fooling ourselves since such an amendment has not the slightest prospect of being adopted except as part of a revolutionary overhauling of our entire governmental system, there are other weighty reasons against such a course. *Any* advocacy of an amendment to the Constitution transfers the blame from the Supreme Court where it belongs, and places it upon the Constitution where it does not belong. The proposal of any amendment tacitly admits that as the Constitution now stands the Supreme Court is justified in what it is doing, and that our real grievance is against the Constitution. That is a libel on the Constitution,—which I believe to be a pretty good document as such documents go. With all of its defects, I think it is a fairly good instrument for democracy to work with, except for the difficulty of amending it. This brings me to another question which must be touched upon in this connection. After every bad decision of the United States Supreme Court, it is customary for our so-called "liberals" to raise the hue and cry that the Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution in a "narrow" way, to wit, in the manner befitting its interpretation in the Eighteenth Century. This claim is absolutely false, and is due to the ignorance of our community with respect to our system of government and the history of our country.

As a matter of fact, no such decisions as are now made by the United States Supreme Court were possible or would have been tolerated at any time during the life of the Framers or for a long time thereafter. It is sufficient to point out in this connection that not until the fateful and dreadful Dred Scot decision did the Supreme Court actually dare to declare a law of Congress unconstitutional. When the Supreme Court dared to do so it was followed by Civil War. The seventy years that elapsed between the framing of the Constitution and the

Dred Scot decision, were the formative period of our government, a period during which our country made as rapid progress as it has made at any time, and went through as many transformations as it has gone through at any time since. During that period, as was only natural, many an important politico-economic question arose, such as the Tariff, Embargo, Internal Improvements, and other similarly weighty problems. But, at no time did it occur to anybody to invoke the power of the Supreme Court for their decision, nor did the Supreme Court up to the Dred Scot decision dare, by a restraining hand, to interfere in the politico-economic affairs of the nation. Nor, is it at all true that had the Supreme Court been exercising the power, its present-day decisions would have been proper even in the Eighteenth Century, as a matter of constitutional interpretation. It is therefore "giving aid and comfort to the enemy" to follow the stupid practice of the liberals of throwing the blame on the Constitution, —in addition to exhibiting utter ignorance of the history of government during the Eighteenth Century in England or in this country.

The real problem before the people of this country is: How may the United States Supreme Court be made to obey the Constitution? In my opinion the worst way of going about it is by trying to amend the Constitution, which the courts continually violate both in the exercise of the power itself and in the *manner* in which they exercise it. There is no need for it, because there is a very simple way of going about it,—simple as to the logic of the situation and simple as to the maner of execution. All that any intelligent supporter of the Judicial Power can claim for it is that it has been in operation long enough to presume the acquiescence of the people. But whatever the people have acquiesced in they may cease to acquiesce in whenever they find that they have made a mistake, or that the power acquiesced in is being abused. The people have acquiesced in the present manner of nominating and electing the President. Can anyone claim, therefore, that this method has become part of our Constitution so that it would require a constitutional amendment to abolish it? Would any man in his senses say that the people could not proceed to elect the President in the manner expressly prescribed by the Constitution? The same is true as to the extra-constitutional, not to say *un*constitutional power now exercised by the Supreme Court. All that is really necessary is for the people to make up their minds that they do not want the Supreme Court any longer to exercise that power, and then proceed to make the Supreme Court obey the Constitution. On similar occasions in the past our leading statesmen, Lincoln and Seward among them, have repeatedly stated that if the Supreme Court disobeyed the Constitution the thing to do was for Congress to proceed to enforce the Constitution as written. For *it must be remembered that the written Constitution provides a method of compelling the Supreme Court to obey its provisions, and places the power of enforcement in the hands of Congress.*

In the first place, there is the provision for impeachment. That provision was put there for exactly such a situation,—to make any federal official, be he President, Supreme Court Judge, or anybody else, carry out the provisions of the Constitution in the manner in which, for the time being, the people, as represented by their representatives in Congress, has interpreted it. In order to

protect such officials, and the policy of the country, against the fluctuations of temporary majorities, the Constitution makes the impeachment process somewhat cumbersome, so as to insure the ultimate fact that the great majority of the people are behind the interpretation placed upon the Constitution by Congress. For that reason, the articles of impeachment must originate in the House, must be tried by the Senate, and a decision cannot be effective unless two-thirds of the Senate have concurred on an article of impeachment found by the House. Under the Constitution, Congress has therefore the *power,* and in my opinion the *duty,* to impeach and remove from office any judge who violates the Constitution by presuming to nullify a law duly passed by Congress and approved by the President.

But there is another way, also provided by the Constitution, a way which does not require so great a consensus of opinion on the subject under consideration. That is the re-organization of the court so as to make it the mouthpiece of the present will of the people, *as every government agency ought to be in a democracy.* Because it is less drastic as far as present incumbents are concerned, it need not have that large consensus of opinion which is required for impeachment. A majority of both houses of Congress and the approval of the President is all that is required for the re-organization of the Supreme Court under the Constitution by increasing its personnel. Its personnel may be increased to any number. It is my private opinion that two or three of the present incumbents of the United States Supreme Court do not believe in the power of the Supreme Court, at least as at present exercised. All that would be necessary, therefore, would be to increase the number of judges of the Supreme Court from nine to fifteen in order to convert the Supreme Court into a body which would renounce that power by a formal decision by a vote of nine to six. Should I be mistaken in that, or should there be any changes for the worse in the meantime, there is nothing to prevent the increase of the judges to nineteen and the appointment of ten men committed to the honest upholding of the Constitution by declaring the power hitherto exercised by the Courts unwarranted by the Constitution. That is, in my opinion, not only the best way, but the only practicable way of going about it. Incidentally, it is the way advocated by the founders of the Republican Party. On March 3, 1858, one year after the power had been first exercised in the Dred Scot case, William H. Seward, principal founder of the Republican Party, declared in the United States Senate that if the Republican Party came into power that was the course they would pursue in order to make the United States Supreme Court obey the Constitution. A Socialist or Communist Party could do no less. A true liberal should advocate no less, or any different course which can only be calculated to obscure the issue and render all attempts to remedy the situation futile.

Nor is the notion that the Supreme Court itself would declare that the courts have no power to declare laws unconsitutional fantastic. On the contrary, that has actually happened once in our history, and it is sure to happen again. There is a little-known incident in American history which must be recalled in this connection,—little known because of the contstantly-working propaganda machine in favor of the Judicial Power, which censors and perverts our history books as well as all other means for the

dissemination of knowledge. When both the country and the Judicial Power were young, the state courts of Kentucky attempted to use the power to declare laws unconstitutional under circumstances which were much more excusable than the exercise of that power by the United States Supreme Court. Like the exercise of that power by the Supreme Court and all other courts, the exercise was in the interest of property and against human rights. But the people of Kentucky were not in a mood to tolerate such an undemocratic power, and a party arose which went to the polls on that issue. That party succeeded, and as a consequence the Legislature elected on that issue legislated out of office the State Court of Appeals which had exercised that power, and organized a new Court of Appeals. This new Court of Appeals officially declared that no such power existed in the courts. The reactionaries, as is usual with reactionaries, refused to bow to the will of the people and maintained the old court in defiance of the verdict of the people at the polls. As a result, there were, for a time, two Courts of Appeals in the State of Kentucky. Subsequently, for reasons which cannot be gone into here, the new party lost at the polls and the old Court of Appeals remained in office. But the moral of the incident must not be overlooked. But for a change of mind of the electorate itself, the new Court of Appeals would have remained in office, and the official court doctrine would have been that the courts did not have the power to declare laws unconstitutional. What has been done in Kentucky can be done in the United States of America. *It will have to be done, if we are not to be forced to overcome the recent decisions in the way the Dred Scot decision had to overcome,—by civil war.*

The foregoing discussion relates solely to the power of the courts over federal legislation,—which is by far the most important. The problem of State legislation which may be in conflict with the Federal Constitution or federal laws is at once more simple and more complex. There can be no question of the fact that the Federal Government must have the final say in any such conflict. Which branch of the Federal Government should have that power, and under what conditions, if at all, the federal courts should exercise that power, has been discussed by me in a study entitled *State and Nation in a Federal System,* published in the West Virginia Law Quarterly Review for December, 1934, and I must refer the special student of the subject to that study. For the lay reader it is sufficient to say that that discussion has no bearing upon the practical problem involved here. The power of the federal courts to declare unconstitutional State laws which contravene the Federal constitution will be assumed. And we will also assume that under the Fourteenth Amendment the Supreme Court has the undoubted power to declare unconstitutional any State law depriving racial or other minorities of civil rights,—that power having been clearly placed by that amendment under the protection of the national government. Whether or not it is possible to frame a constitutional amendment which would at once preserve this power while depriving the Supreme Court of the right to abuse the so-called "Due Process" clause contained in the same amendment, need not be gone into here, for the simple reason that whatever can be done by such an amendment can also be done by a simple law of Congress, which is not only much more easy to pass, but also more easy to correct if it

should be found that a mistake had been made, or that the court misinterpreted the law either with respect to continuing the abuses under the "Due Process" clause, or by refusing to protect the civil liberties intended to be protected by the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Constitution itself does not contain the right of appeal to the Supreme Court from the decisions of State courts. That right was given in the First Judiciary Act, adopted in 1789. But for that provision there would be no way for the Supreme Court to review the decisions of State courts, and the constitutionality of that section itself has long been denied by very eminent statesmen and by a number of leading state courts of last resort. The constitutionality and propriety of that section is now no longer open to dispute, but it is equally undisputed that under a specific provision of the Constitution Congress can regulate that power. It is also conceded that Congress can limit the jurisdiction of the lower federal courts. It is therefore within the undoubted power of Congress to deprive the lower federal courts of all rights to pass upon the constitutionality of state laws, and at the same time so regulate the right of appeal to the United States Supreme Court as to bring about any desirable reform that could be brought about by constitutional amendment. Congress could, for instance, provide that no state law which has been approved as constitutional by the highest court of the State can be declared unconstitutional except by the unanimous vote of all the judges of the United States Supreme Court. Any other desirable limitation of the power could be equally assured by simple congressional legislation. And, as already stated, since congressional legislation is a much more pliable instrument than constitutional amendment, there is less danger that the Supreme Court would either disregard or abuse an Act of Congress than a constitutional amendment.

For a Socialist Policy on Palestine

Felix Morrow

AFTER fifty years of intensive work and tremendous material support from world Jewry, the Zionists have been able to settle in Palestine only 2½% of the world's Jewish population. This meager result is scarcely commensurate with the truly gigantic efforts expended. What is even more decisive is that these 375,000 Jews live today in Palestine under the same horrors of capitalism as their brethren in the Diaspora. The economic crisis rages in Palestine as elsewhere; there is hunger and unemployment, exploitation and insecurity; and the Jew remains a stranger, hated by the Arabian majority, subject to an epidemic of killings for the third time since 1920, the "Jewish homeland" resembling an armed garrison in enemy territory; the Palestinian Jew is still in *Galuth,* protected patronizingly by British bayonets.

There is nothing surprising in this outcome of the Zionist dream. It was predicted by Jewish socialists, thirty years ago, when they warred against the diversion to Zionism of Jewish workers' energies better devoted to

the class struggle. What was "dogma" thirty years ago has been proven to the hilt now. The attempt to build a Jewish national state under capitalism has been demonstrated to be a reactionary Utopia.

Under what conditions could a Jewish national state be built under capitalism? It would require the following exceptionally favorable economic conditions; a large internal market to support its new industries and produce; rich natural resources to provide competitive power in the world market; or, as a substitute, the possession of such new and unique industries as no other country possesses; and, above all, a progressively expanding world market in which Palestine's infant industries could successfully wedge their way in between the giant industries of the great imperialist powers.

Not one of these exceptionally favorable conditions are present. There is no large internal market; there are no new industries different from those of other countries; there are no rich natural resources in Palestine. Finally, and decisively, the characteristic feature of the present epoch is the ever narrowing of the world market, the ever more desperate struggle for world trade—a struggle in which infant Palestinian industry cannot seriously compete.

Thus, the most elementary Marxian economic analysis demonstrates that in this epoch of capitalist decline Palestine cannot expand her agriculture and industry. Her main export, citrus fruits, does not begin to keep her trade deficit from growing; for she must continue to import goods manufactured more cheaply than they can be made in Palestine, and her large imports of basic foodstuffs reveals that she cannot even raise her necessary food.

How desperate the economic situation is in Palestine is not revealed by the statisticians of the Zionist organizations. The average income of the workers in the cooperatives; the average wage of the worker in private farming and industry; the extent of unemployment—these are not discussed in the voluminous periodical and pamphlet literature. But enough is known to indicate that the mass of the workers are being driven down toward the Asiatic level of the Arab fellaheen—which is scarcely surprising to a Marxist who knows that wage levels tend to equalize under competition. The crisis is expressed in the ever more bitter competition for jobs between Arab and Jewish labor. Zionist labor literature abounds in references to the "Jewish farmers' betrayal of Jewish labor, i.e., hiring of Arab labor. The pressure of the Zionists on these growers "even to the extent that this struggle is successful, creates not a healthy Jewish peasant element, but at best, wage labor on a starvation scale," admits a Poale Zion spokesman, Berl Locker. Arab and Jewish labor draw closer together, unfortunately, in their economic misery only.

The favorite argument of the Zionists, that Palestine would create a "normal" Jewish proletariat, rooted in agriculture and heavy industry, has proved a myth. The world market is sufficiently saturated with agriculture and heavy industry not to permit a new state to develop on their foundations. Only about 12% of the Jewish population are agricultural wage-earners (both owners and workers) and their dependents. The agricultural community grows progressively smaller in relation to the cities; the tendency is definitely one from country to city. This economic trend is reinforced by Jews fleeing from the farms to the cities for protection from the Arabs. Yet the Zionist pamphlets continue to fea-

ture, as if this were the prevailing mode of life, idyllic photographs of Jewish agriculturists. . . .

And of the 12% in farming, nearly half are in labor agriculture, so-called. With a total disregard for the elementary principles of Marxism, the Poale Zion propagandists call these miserable cooperatives and settlements "Socialist." Socialism presupposes the use of socialist methods of production upon the basis of the advanced technology taken over from capitalism; it requires, in other words, the overthrow of capitalism. Only those who have never known that Marx fought Proudhon precisely on this question, could call socialist these producers' cooperatives, technologically inferior to the capitalist farms and competing with them only at the expense of the living standards of the workers in the cooperatives. The whole case for these cooperatives is given away by the fact that the statistician for the Histadrut, in explaining why the cooperatives do not grow more quickly, had to mention "the inevitable magnetic attraction of higher city wages." So much for the renaissance of Jewish farming.

Of the 32% of the population supported by industry, over half are employed in the building or building material trades. In other words, they depend on a never-ending supply of outside capital brought in by middle-class immigrants. Another 23% live on commerce and transport — about three-fourths of this percentage are engaged in middlemen occupations. Another 11% are in the liberal professions, while a full 22% live on outside support and non-productive incomes. Look at these figures, and see how "normal" is the Jewish life of Palestine.

If world capitalism makes impossible the building of a Jewish economy in Palestine, Britain makes this doubly impossible. The skeleton in the closet of Zionism is the fact that Palestine is a British colony; Zionists don't like to talk realistically about this decisive fact. The Zionist policy, however, is to sell themselves to Britain for the best price available—concessions, loans, etc. The "Labor" Zionists are no better: "Who does not cooperate with the mandate government is a traitor to the cause of building the land and nation," said Ben-Gurion, head of the Histadrut (Jewish Federation of Unions). But can the Zionists outbid for England's favor the ruling elements of the twenty-odd millions of Arabs in Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Palestine?

Palestine is absolutely basic to the British empire. The gateway to all her African colonies and to India is the Suez Canal; and Palestine guards the canal. The pipe-lines of the rich oil fields of Iraq also pass through Palestine. English hegemony in the Near East requires collaboration with the Arab landowners, merchants and priests. Of course, England plays a skillful game of using Zionists and Arabs against each other and thus—as in her incitation of the Moslem-Hindu struggles in India—divides and rules. But the Arab millions are basically more important to England than are the Zionists, and she will certainly not aid the Zionists to build to the point of dominating Palestinian economy. England's "arbitrary" measures against Jewish immigration, manipulation of tariffs against Jewish products, arrests of Jewish picketers of Arab labor, etc., are a reflection of England's basic policy.

Furthermore, imperialist England will brook no building in Palestine of industries in competiton with those of

Britain. For military purposes she has encouraged the electrification and potash industries, but that is all. Why should England do for Palestine what she has rigidly discouraged in other colonies—development of competitive native industries?

From every point of view, therefore, it is clear that Palestinian economy cannot grow under capitalism.

To recognize this truth, is to recognize the bankruptcy of Zionism, including "Socialist-Zionism." The lip service paid to Socialism by the "Socialist-Zionist" (Poale Zionists) has been a fraud; everywhere they collaborate with the Jewish capitalists, and take no real part in the class struggle; their energies have gone to Zionist work. The best of them must recognize now that their best means of serving the national freedom of the Jewish masses is by turning their energies to the class struggle in whatever land they inhabit.

Within Palestine, too, a decisive reorientation of the Jewish proletariat is required. Led by the "Mapai" (united party of Poale Zion and Zeire Zion), the Jewish workers have been pursuing the false policy of seeking to build a Jewish homeland under capitalism. For the sake of that illusion, they have drifted farther and farther apart from their natural allies, the Arab peasants and workers. In permanent unity within the Jewish Agency, these so-called Socialist-Zionist leaders have carried on the grossest class-collaboration with the Jewish bourgeoisie; have fawned upon British imperialism; have raised chauvinist slogans of Jewish work for Jews only and buy Jewish-made goods only; have cut wages to meet Arab competition instead of uniting with Arabs in single trade unions; have picketed places where Jews dared to employ Arab labor. They have made infinitely easier the task of the Arab ruling classes, who have turned the Arab worker's discontent with his lot into the channel of anti-Jewish riots. What is needed, if the Jewish masses are to take a real step toward a free Palestine, if the Jewish masses, indeed, are not to be massacred by a widespread Arab attack, is an end to collaboration with British imperialism and the Jewish bourgeoisie, and a turn to unity with the Arab masses.

Arab-Jewish struggle against British imperialism is a slogan which will be fought not only by the Zionists but equally by the Arabian landowners and bourgeoisie. One would have to search far before one could find a more venal colonial ruling class and one less capable of taking part in freeing the Arabian people from the yoke of Britain. The British-appointed Arab High Council and the Moslem Supreme Council (the latter disposing of the considerable income of the religious foundations to which Arabs everywhere contribute), the Effendis who live in cosmopolitan luxury on the backs of the incredibly exploited peasant sharecroppers, and the shopkeepers and intelligentsia who serve the upper classes and the government—these gentry cannot possibly wage a real struggle against British imperialism. They have so far prevented the nationalist movement from raising any anti-British slogans; they have channelized it in anti-Jewish struggles. True, they use the masses as a form of pressure on England to make concessions to the Arabian upper classes. But their ties are infinitely closer with the imperialists than with the Arabian masses on whose backs they live. The leader of the Arab miltants, Jamal el Husseini, typifies the present Arab leadership. A member of the powerful Husseini family,

related not only to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem but also to King Ghazi of Iraq and Emir Abdulla of Trans-Jordan, he recently declared: "The Arabians would probably with equanimity submit to the British rule in Palestine which, we readily admit, has been of great benefit to the country. But, on the other hand, we will not silently stand by while the Jews slowly but surely cut us out, protected by British bayonets." There, in a few words, is the reactionary program of the present Arab leadership.

Even should this leadership be displaced by "left" elements from the intelligentsia and the petty bourgeoisie, this process would undoubtedly merely follow the course recently taken in Egypt and Syria. There the aristocratic leadership was finally displaced by petty-bourgeois oppositionists. But the Egyptian Wafdists, having come to power, have extracted some concessions and taken over the emoluments of office, sent the masses back to their shops and hovels and made their peace with the English overlords. The identical development is now being completed in Syria, with the insurgent bourgeois leadership coming to terms with French imperialism. Thus, it has become abundantly clear in Syria and Egypt, as in 1927 when the Kuomintang in China overthrew the old warlords only to take their place at the round table with the imperialists, that colonial nationalist movements in our epoch cannot lead to freedom so long as they are led by the bourgeoisie.

The failure to correctly estimate the present leadership of the Arabian nationalist movement is at the root of the reactionary line of the Communist parties. They hail the pogroms against the Jews as a "revolutionary upsurge" and see in every Arab politician a "serious fighter against British imperialism." This reactionary line of the communist par- with the present Peoples Front policy, goes further back. It is identical with the policy pursued in China, 1925-1927, of support of Chiang-Kai-Shek and Wang Ching Wei. In Palestine itself, where every Jewish worker sees for himself what game the Arab leaders are playing, the Communist Party line has driven many back into the arms of the Zionists. In America and elsewhere, the communist identification of pogroms with revolution has contributed not a little to refusal of Jewish workers to take the revolutionary road. The official communist line is one of seeking a coalition with the Arabian leadership, to use for pressure purposes in dickering with British imperialism. We, who are interested in freedom of the Arab people from British domination, have nothing in common with the Stalinist diplomatic game.

What organizational forms the unity of the Arab and Jewish masses will take cannot be predicted in advance. The need for a single trade union movement is a burning one; and if the Histadrut, which in many respects is not a trade union organization, proves too inflexible, a new labor union may have to be built. Such questions are, however, for the future to decide.

But what is absolutely indispensable and must immediately be built is a revolutionary Socialist Party of the Arab and Jewish vanguard. The so-called Socialist-Zionist party, the Poale Zion Zeire Zion, by its whole past has demonstrated that it has nothing in common with Marxism and it cannot be transformed for it is rooted in Zionism. Any militant elements in it will be ready to leave it, if only a real socialist

banner is raised. The Left Poale Zion, a small group, has developed to the point where according to its concepts it logically has no excuse for calling itself Zionist or maintaining a separate Jewish organization. Its forces belong in the socialist party that must be built; they need only to break with the organizational forms of their past. Furthermore, the mass of the Jewish workers in Palestine includes many class-conscious workers, raised in the traditions of the revolutionary movement of Europe and a generation of youth. Thus Palestine already has the necessary elements for leading a colonial revolution. They will see glorious perspectives open before them. Given a correct course, the little country of Palestine could lead the Arabian masses and the Near East in a world-shaking revolt against imperialism.

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The Geneva Youth Congress

Joseph P. Lash

THREE years ago the International Federation of League of Nations Societies initiated a movement for a world youth congress which should lay the basis for a mass youth movement affiliated with their national societies. In the course of the preparations it became apparent to the organizers that they themselves could not mobilize the youth of the world. As a condition of receiving the cooperation of youth organizations they were compelled to relegate the creation of an IFLNS youth movement to the background and to emphasize the unification of youth around a common plan of international cooperation for the prevention of war and the organization of peace.

The World Youth Congress which took place in Geneva was representative. Over 500 delegates attended as well as some 250 observers. Practically every important country was represented except Germany, Italy and Japan. Every important international youth organization had delegates except the Catholic and Socialist. The Count H. Marty represented the Boy Scouts International Bureau. The most important delegations such as the Chinese, United States, English, French, Canadian, Belgian, Czech, Soviet, Spanish were genuinely representative of the youth of their countries, while a few delegations such as the Polish, Hungarian and Bulgarian were handpicked by their governments. The Congress lacked sufficient representation from trade union youth. Nor did sufficient effort seem to have been put into getting delegates from the countries of South and Central America.

Colorful incidents were plentiful. The Spanish delegation was recruited from the People's Front. It came directly from the front wearing uniforms of *miliciens*. The IFLNS organizers wanted to withhold credentials on the ground that the Congress should be neutral in the Spanish struggle. When a revolt threatened, the credential were granted and the 16 *miliciens* were seated amid a great ovation. The arrival of the sturdy Soviet delegation sent a thrill through the assembly hall. But the high spot of the Congress was the denunciation of Japan by a young, beautiful Chinese girl who had just come all the way from Shanghai. As the reactionary Swiss Federal Council had forbidden hostile references to other governments, she never mentioned the word "Japan," but the attack was telling.

We have already mentioned one of the difficulties encountered by the Congress—the restrictions of the Swiss federal authorities whose communication read as follows: "The members of the Congress shall, in their speeches and resolutions, refrain from all attack against or criticism of any nation, its government or its representatives." Another difficulty in the way of decisive action was the broadness of the Congress. (This was also its virtue, but we shall deal with that later.) The international youth organizations such as the International Student Service and the World Student Christian Fellowship balked at the Congress's taking a vigorous stand because of their sections in fascist countries. And throughout, the I F L N S organizers of the Congress, while talking grandiloquently of youth being autonomous, intrigued in every way to keep the Congress under their thumb.

What could a Congress working under such conditions accomplish and what should have been the attitude of socialist and communist youth toward it? In the first place it may categorically be said that the failure of the Socialist Youth International to support the Congress was unfortunate. Whatever else might be said of the Geneva conclave it was broad and it was the responsibility of socialist youth to be present and give it leadership.

The tasks of such a congress cannot be understood without some discussion of the world peace crisis. The basic assumption at the Congress was that the immediate threat to peace came from Germany, Italy and Japan. Insofar as internal preparations for war were concerned, these nations were ready. *When* Germany or Japan would take the step that would precipitate war now hinged upon such factors as neutralizing England, winning support in the Balkans, paralyzing France by exacerbating internal antagonisms, etc. The nearer that Europe came to aligning itself into two equal or near equal camps, the nearer was war. Thus, if Germany succeeds in creating with the tacit or open support of Italy a central European bloc along with Hungary, Roumania, Austria, Jugoslavia and Poland, the danger of war could not be greater. Correspondingly, the more Germany is isolated, the longer the possibility of postponing war. And since it is the reactionary forces in each country that support cooperation with Germany, the degree to which the peace movement in each country circumvents such cooperation with the Nazis marks its own victory over internal reaction. This struggle in concretized around the slogan of collective security. The reactionaries in all European countries and Germany especially denounce collective security as a method of generalizing a local conflict into a world one. For collective security they would substitute regional pacts in order, so they claim, to localize war. But this is merely in keeping with the Nazi's plans to make war upon the U.S.S.R., etc., one at a time.

This struggle to prevent Europe's aligning itself into two equal blocs was reflected in the Geneva Congress. Constant efforts were made to split away a small minority of conservative delegations from the Congress, notably the Bulgarian, Polish, Hungarian and the international youth organizations. Had these efforts succeeded it would have given credence to those who were trying to discredit the Congress as a communist one and dovetailed with the strategy of the fascists of splitting Europe into two camps.

Negotiations have been going on between Hitler and the Catholic Church whereby Hitler would allow some freedom to the Catholic youth organizations in Germany, in return for which the Catholic Church would place an interdiction upon Catholic youth's participation in the progressive youth movement all over the world. Not many Catholic youth groups were represented at Geneva, but it was essential to retain those that were. For example, if the Catholic youth in Belgium place anti-Socialism at the front of their program, then they must become pro-Hitler. Outstanding among the Catholic youth at the Congress was the leader of the Belgian Catholic youth organization. The Congress was able to win his and other Catholics' promise of cooperation with its permanent work.

The most notable achievement of the Geneva Congress seems to me to have been its maintenance of unity. A permanent organization has been set up in

Geneva with a permanent secretary, elected by the Congress, who is Elizabeth Shields-Collins of the University Labour Federation of England. Moreover the permanent bureau is independent of the IFLNS. In addition the national delegations voted unanimously to set up national youth liaison committess which would build the peace movement among youth in their respective countries. This has less significance for countries such as ours, where there are broad peace movements, than it has for Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, etc., where it will now be possible for the first time to build a legal peace movement among the young people.

To maintain this unity the left wing at the Congress made great sacrifices. It did not pass a motion of solidarity with the Spanish and Chinese youth for which sufficient support could have been mustered. It did not press a motion stating that governments which were prisoners of their ruling class could not be depended upon to enforce collective security. It it did not insist upon international youth actions to reinforce peace such as strikes and demonstrations.

The only broad delegation ready to take such action, except of course for the Soviet, Chinese and Spanish, was the American. Because our youth peace movement is far in advance of that in Europe, our presence in Geneva was important. We were crucial in winning the principle of autonomy for the Congress and its continuations groups. In all the commissions we spoke for a progressive point of view. The mere presence of a delegation of 36 from the U. S. was an inspiration to the remainder of the delegates. But our continuations work here must not be geared to that set by the Congress. The slogan of collective security which was the basis of the Congress may be correct for the united front in Europe but is inapplicable to the U. S., where mass resistance to war and the preparations for war of the American government must continue to be our strategy. U. S. participation in the League might just as likely paralyze League action against an aggressor as aid it. American youth can best support the Geneva youth congress by maintaining their determination not to support any war which the U. S. government may undertake.

Book Reviews

IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE
by Sinclair Lewis, New York City, Doubleday Doran & Co., 458 pp., $2.50.

I think that as a novelist, Sinclair Lewis has been on the downgrade ever since he wrote *Arrowsmith*. *Mantrap* was as feeble as the best of Rupert Hughes, Fannie Hurst, or Kathleen Norris. *Elmer Gantry* was a valuable and cutting work of social satire, but it depended too much on caricature and too little upon characterization. *The Man Who Knows Coolidge* was an amusing footnote on human conduct, padded to fill the space lengths of a short novel. With all the water run out of it, it might have made an excellent short story in the Ring Lardner *genre*. In *Dodsworth*, Lewis gave his hand away. His entire literary career reveals that its talents lay predominantly along the line of social satire. When the bite was absent from his writing, and the edge of his sarcasm was dulled, he was unable to

compensate for these with understanding characterization; the novel was weak. *Ann Vickers* is describable as something of a public scandal. Any serious American writer—let alone a Nobel prize winner—should be ashamed of himself for writing as badly as did Lewis in the first hundred pages of that book. There were flashes of the earlier Lewis, particularly of his descriptions of the Copperhead Gap Penitentiary, but Lewis so muffed the ball in the depiction of his heroine that *Ann Vickers* must go down as a pretty inferior article. This novel afforded Lewis the splendid opportunity of adding significantly to the portrait gallery of American literature; his chance was that of presenting a devastating picture of that type of lady social reformer who still plagues the land . He could have given us the Madame Perkinses of America, once and for all. However, the character slipped through the author's fingers and vanished, leaving behind, merely the imprint of a little goo in his palm. In *Work of Art* Lewis managed successfully to negate the spirit and the satire of his finest book, *Babbitt*. His theme was that the babbitt was the real artist, and his particular hero was as colorless, as dreary, as deadly as Governor Landon speaking in the news reel. In order to establish contrast within his plot structure, he created a stooge bohemian poet, and poured feeble scorn upon his head. This treatment was so weak that one whole side of the story fell apart. Technically, the story was as cheap as its theme was obvious.

It Can't Happen Here is Lewis' most provocative novel since *Elmer Gantry*. It has introduced the issue of fascism into American literature, and inasmuch as Lewis sells widely, it has called this issue to the attention of a large audience of book readers. The jacket of this novel states: "What Sinclair Lewis had to say about Small Towns in *Main Street*—About Business Men in *Babbitt*—About Science in *Arrowsmith*—About Wives in *Dodsworth*—he has at last said about American Politics and a world bound for war in . . . *It Can't Happen Here*." There is some justice to the blurb writers' assertion. The only question is: how does he do it, both in terms of literature and also in terms of an understanding of American politics and of the potentially fascist forces within the framework of American society?

I shall not attempt to summarize the story of *It Can't Happen Here* at this late date. Suffice it to state that it is the picture of what might happen in the America of 1936 under the control of a fascist dictatorship. The hero of the novel, Doremus Jessup, is a foil for the expression of Lewis' own views, and through him Lewis registers his own protest and indignation against fascism.

One of the most notable features of *It Can't Happen Here* is that the quality of the characterizations in the earlier Lewis novels is missing. The level of insight into human beings is that of *Ann Vickers* and *Work of Art*, rather than that of *Babbitt*. Thus, Jessup's mistress, Lorinda Pike, is a mere stick of wood alongside of the poignantly human Leora Arrowsmith. Similarly, his other Vermonters are heavy, often stereotyped. When he comes to depicting communists he is at his worst. He makes them merely concrete and walking objections to the theory of social fascism. This is no way to depict even minor characters. His American Mussolini, Buzz Windrip, is recognizably American, as is his edition of Hanfstaengel, Dr. Macgoblin. He has a good

portrait of a D.A.R. type, Mrs. Adelaide Tarr Gimmitch. For the rest, his characters are so carelessly drawn that there is little conviction to them. Just as his insight has become conventionalized, so has his satire and his sarcasm become shoddy. Thus, his criticisms of the communists with reference to "St. Lenin." Fascism can happen here. And in this novel, Sinclair Lewis is earnestly striving to tell us that it can happen here. But the sloppiness of his craftsmanship, and the limitations of the insight he brings to bear in his characterizations become almost counter arguments to his thesis.

Of more importance is Lewis' conceptions of politics, and of fascism. His description of the rise of American fascism is a mechanical transposition of what happened in Germany, with perhaps one or two Italian footnotes. We have here, Brown Books of the terrors of Nazi concentration camps, an Americanized version of *Mein Kampf,* even such an incidental feature of fascism as homosexuality amongst the German leaders. There are serious gaps and omissions in Lewis' description of the course of a possible American fascism. It happens over night, and inexplicably. Buzz Windrip is inaugurated, and he blossoms out as a White House Hitler. There is no indication of the financial powers behind Windrip, and his ally, Bishop Prang. There is no claim indicative of the role played by the petty bourgeoisie, and by its political representatives. Lewis even left a few gaps in his mechanical transpositions. He brings in Buzz Windrip, without introducing any American Brunings, or Factas, or Giolittis. In other words, he ushers fascism into his narrative without establishing any of the preconditions for the rise of fascism. There is no breakdown of the democratic bourgeois regime. There is no indication of the rise of a militant working class movement which would throw the bourgeosie into a fright, and force it to bring in a dictator. When fascism happens, there are reasons for it. Lewis has fascism happen almost without reasons. In order to defend his omissions it cannot be argued that he was writing a novel, and not a political treatise. He uses space to present the fascist platform of Windrip, and he has descriptions of the histories of his fascist leaders. If he goes into such detail, we are justified in asking, where is your establishment of the preconditions of fascism? Where have you given us the reasons why it can happen, and the pattern of how it can happen? In failing to include such features of fascism into his narrative, Lewis deprived his novel of an initial plausibility.

The same criticism is true of his conclusion. The revolt against fascism at the end of the book is almost as inexplicable as is its rise A large area of the middle west is broken off. There is civil war. There are no class alignments behind this civil war. The leader is a Republican politician, Trowbridge, whom Windrip had defeated in the 1936 presidential campaign. Trowbridge is fighting for the ideal of "a universal partnership in which the state must own all resources so large that they affect all members of the state and in which the worst crimes won't be murder or kidnapping but taking advantage of the state."

In this novel, Lewis is arguing and pleading for a liberal America, and his hero expresses the faith of a liberal American. I will not argue with Mr. Lewis for choosing such a theme, and for defending such an attitude. Such

an argument would have to be made on my grounds. I would rather criticize Lewis on his own grounds. Within his own point of view, he does not do himself justice. Recently, a narrative of personal experience under Italian fascism has come out in this country, *Road to Exile* by Emilio Lussu (Covici Friede). Lussu was a liberal member of the Italian parliament during the days when Mussolini was preparing to march on Rome in a sleeping car. Lussu reveals his liberal position in this book and he writes a moving and convincing story. The narrative tells us as much about the rise of Italian fascism as any book on the subject with which I am familiar. However, it does no injustice to the pattern of events with which he is dealing. It creates no strain on the reader's sense of plausibility. The reason for the lapses in this book are not just liberalism *quo* liberalism.

I think that one of the reasons is this: Sinclair Lewis has always seemed to have thought within the orbit of common sense. The basis from which he has levelled his cutting satire upon American institutions, and American types has been that of common sense. Common sense provided him with sufficient resources to attack the Babbitts and the Main Streeters. The subject matter of a novel such as *It Can't Happen Here* would force him to depend upon more than merely common sense. For this novel, he obviously enlarged his information with Brown Books of Nazi Germany, and the like. He did not extend his theoretical equipment. He tried to write a book on fascism with a fund of information, a background of common sense, and the faith of a liberal. It is no wonder that his book is distorted by serious omissions in the pattern of events on the one hand, and by ignorance on the other when he fails to distinguish between fascism and communism in passing comments which he offers. He became indignant. He felt through some of the horrors of fascism. He has never thought through the material he mechanically transposed from Germany to America. In consequence, *It Can't Happen Here* is superficial. It suffers both as literature and as politics.

At this date, it is not necessary to assert the right of a novelist to produce books with a message and a point of view. In criticizing Sinclair Lewis here, we need not distinguish between this novel and his earlier ones. Behind them, we can find the same implicit point of view as the one which he presents now more explicitly. The fact that he has a message is no defense for his stereotyped characterizations. The defense that his book is a novel is no defense for his bad politics, and his damaging inability to grasp the theoretical meanings of fascism. There are too many instances of novels of this same category, which stand up both as good literature and as sound politics. As examples, I might cite Ignazio Silone's *Fontamarra* and Theodor Plivier's *The Kaiser Goes; The Generals Remain.* Plivier, in treating of the German Revolution in 1918, did not sacrifice the literary values of his book because he was treating of revolutionary politics. He did not sacrifice the political soundness of his book because he was writing a novel.

What is lacking in Lewis' book is both his insight into his characters, and his comprehension of politics. In consequence, the book is a jumbled up and mechanical picture of the possible rise of American fascism. One of the lessons which it might teach is—don't trust your gardener. Shad Ladue, the Jessup gar-

dener, is the most objectionable character in the book. He becomes a Vermont storm troop leader. Hence, the lesson.

It Can't Happen Here registers an honest and well-intentioned but rubber-stamped protest against fascism. It becomes a slogan that reads: *We Don't Want Fascism!* It contains little else of value. It lacks power as a novel, and it is without the political insight which its theme demands.

JAMES T. FARRELL

FRANCE TODAY
by Maurice Thorez, $1.75.
FRANCE FACES THE FUTURE
by Ralph Fox, $1.25.
Both published by the International Publishers, New York.

When Ralph Fox wrote "France Faces the Future" he did not know, of course, that by the time his book reached America, Spain would be aflame with civil war. Had he imagined such a possibility he would not have written these words in his introduction:

> "In Spain the People's Front has brought down, without a shot fired, a government of the Fascist parties and replaced it by a government of the left pledged to social reform and the ending of feudal privilege."

In these words, and in fact, in Mr. Fox's whole book we see displayed that childish ignoring of the teachings of history that has led to the extraordinary development of the People's Front movement. Here we have the official communist applause for the People's Front, wherever and whenever achieved. It betrays a helpless inability to read the signs of the times or to foresee any possible evolution of a given situation other than that confidently predicted by the Comintern. The present situation in Spain must be painfully shocking to those who envisioned the Spanish Church and the Castilian aristocracy yielding their power and glory "without a shot."

Fox's book purports to be a history of the People's Front in France. It reviews, without adding much information or interpretation, what informed radicals already know of the inception and development of the popular front movement. We are given a too sketchy overview of the contending forces in France —the Bank of France, the two hundred families, the Church, the various fascist groups and their leaders. We are treated to a retailing of the events of February 6, 1934, which the author calls a "coup d'etat." We are given an enthusiastic account of the left demonstrations of February 12, which were the answer to the "fascist coup." We are led step by step through the development of the United Front between the Communist and Socialist Parties, and here the author cannot refrain from a backhanded slap at the "dilatory tactics of the socialist leaders, much in the style of the "third period." We are handed the official Communist Party apology for the Franco-Soviet pact. And in the end we are told of Blum's election and of the courage and confidence with which France faces the future. France now has no fears, come war or winter weather. This courage and confidence comes because the

> "parties of the People's Front have made it clear that they are voting for a change, that they are determined there shall be no gap between word and deed, between promise and performance in the work of the new government. They voted for a France free, strong and happy, and they mean to have it."

This quotation, in its lyrical optimism, is typical of the style in which Mr.

Fox's book is written. It is representative of the lyrical optimism which is the communist attitude toward all united fronts and toward People's Front governments in particular. It is the tragic obstinacy of history that it takes no account of either lyricism or optimism. The Blum government is facing problems not foreseen by the optimistic advocates of the People's Front. In calling upon the European powers for neutrality in the Spanish Civil War, Blum undoubtedly thought that he was serving the interests of peace and of the French workers. Instead he was digging a grave for the People's Front in Spain. However involuntarily, he was aiding the fascist forces that the People's Front is supposed to combat. He was helping to erect in Spain a fascist state which, with Germany, will hold France as in a vise. It is true that any other move on his part, for example, the open extension of aid to the Spanish government—might have precipitated civil war in France. But even now he cannot be sure that civil war will not be forced on him by the French fascists. In how much better position would the workers of France be today if they were not committed to support of the government! In opposition they could hold in check any move to help the Spanish fascists. They could strike against the arms makers. They could as private citizens send arms, money and men to Spain.

The truth is that the Blum government is in no better plight than the Macdonald governments of 1924 or of 1929; in no better position than the bourgeois governments in Germany and in Austria in which the Social Democrats participated. The People's Front government stands unmasked, in spite of Mr. Fox's hymn of praise, as our old enemy *coalition government*. In view of fifteen years of communist denunciation of coalitions and of class collaboration, this book sounds more than a little hollow.

Maurice Thorez' book "France Today, and the People's Front" differs from Ralph Fox's very little. It is more scholarly and less poetic. While covering essentially the same ground, it gives more substantial material. His review of the economic circumstances of the French workers and of the middle classes makes intelligible the sudden political upheaval in what, in 1932, seemed the most stable and most prosperous of European states. His review of the banking oligarchy is more circumstantial and informed. His treatment of the crisis in agriculture, an important factor in the formation of the People's Front, is revealing. There is little to choose between the two volumes when it comes to the treatment of the fascist groups and the rise of the popular front movement.

When, however, Thorez tells us that

> "The Communist Party refuses to treat all capitalist parties as a 'single reactionary mass' or to believe that on the social chess-board there are only two forces, two great armies facing each other—the capitalist army and the socialist army. Such a conception of things is too simple." (page 177)

he does add something to socialist theory. Something, however, that socialists will reject. Ever since the Marxian philosophy found expression in concrete political organizations it has been assumed that alliances with bourgeois parties, however "left" they seemed, could lead only to disaster. The experience of the German parties with such alliances produced Liebknecht's slogan "No compromise, no political trading." Even in England, where the Marxian influence has been slight, the actual ex-

perience of the labor movement taught the necessity of abstention from political alliances and the need of independent political action. Now Thorez, in a single paragraph tells us that we have been wrong. All "capitalist parties" are not a "single reactionary mass." There are "good" capitalist parties and "bad" ones. We must be allied with the good ones and fight the bad ones. And why must we abandon our old separatism? Because

> "The proletariat while pursuing its own aims must secure alliances, whether temporary or lasting, with the peasant masses and the democratic middle classes, in order to prevent the victory of Fascism in France and to change the relation of forces on the international scale in favor of the proletariat."

Socialists who were not stampeded by the fear of fascism, and who realized the danger of submerging the proletarian movement in the swamp of middle class reformism, opposed the People's Front from the beginning. Events in France and in Spain have proved them right. Loaded with responsibility for the problems of a dying capitalism, the workers of France are in as false a position as were the workers of Germany in 1919, in 1928 and in 1932. What we are not told in either of these books as clearly as it ought to be told, is that the workers of France were persuaded to adopt a mongrel program of reform far less advanced than that of the German Social Democracy, chiefly for the sake of the Franco-Soviet pact.

What the theory of the People's Front ignores is that the fight against fascism is essentially the fight of the proletariat. The "masses of the peasants and of the democratic middle classes" in Spain or in France have not been made immune to fascism because they are in a People's Front. We have not yet heard the end of the story. There may yet be, in both countries, mass defections to the enemy. Let us hope this is not the case, because then the price paid by our French and Spanish comrades for their optimism and their folly will be as tragic as the price paid by the German workers for their docility and their lack of foresight. For ourselves, let us learn from their example and avoid the pitfalls of the People's Front. DAVID P. BERENBERG

A NOTE ON LITERARY CRITICISM

by James T. Farrell. The **Vanguard Press**, New York City, **1936. 221 pp. $2.50.**

One of the most frequent ways of damning a book is to begin by praising the good will and intention of its author. If, however, I do—as I must—begin in this way in writing about *A Note on Literary Criticism,* I do not mean it as a back-handed condemnation. The simple truth is that Farrell's intentions, in this book, are admirable, his purpose both excellent and important; but his execution, in part uneven, in part very bad indeed. The result is not a very good book, but one that was worth writing and is now worth reading and thinking about.

Farrell decided, apparently, to break through the smug, Philistine circle of "official" radical literary criticism, to fight his way out of the intellectual marsh of *New Masess,* the Old John Reed Club, the new *Partisan Review and Anvil.* Equipped with genuine creative talent and a sense for literary values, he has taken up critical arms against what he defines as "revolutionary sentimentalism" and "mechanical determinism." With effective and conclusive aim, he reaches one after another—Freeman and

Schneider and Burgum and Cowley and Hicks and their fellow-parasites—bringing to the surface their absurdities and contradictions and plain ignorance.

What seems to have happened is a rebellion of Farrell's native good sense against the "interpretations" of art and literature imposed from above by the ponderous Comintern theoreticians. As a practising novelist, he could see that the intemperate abuse and crude abstractions of *New Masses* did not clarify the problems of the new and young writers in this country, and, likewise, did no good service to the revolutionary movement to which these writers were, allegedly, sympathetic. He saw that a good novel was not identical with political propaganda (whatever might be their indirect relationships), that artistic ability is separable from political insight, that it is not the business of a "party line" to dictate plot and sentence structure. And in this book he has attempted to explain and justify these convictions.

Unfortunately, Farrell has selected a wrong method for his explanation. What he should have done would have been to put down his convictions in simple and direct language, as a writer and man of good sense. But, instead, he has tried to be high-toned and metaphysical, to elaborate complex categories and expound an advanced "philosophy" of criticism. The consequence is a series of blunders, and the unevenness which I have mentioned. For Farrell does not know enough about philosophy, "dialectics," and formal philosophical method, and he becomes merely pretentious when he writes as if he did. On one page he "sums up" Aquinas in a page or two, on another outlines the "fundamentals" of Spinoza, passes off Whitehead in a paragraph or two; and in between makes elementary errors in the use of technical terms, refutes Cowley's subjectivism in his doctrine of values by an appeal to a naive objectivist doctrine that would contradict any form of materialism; and lapses frequently into appeals to the "tone" or "feel" of writers, of "the interpretation of life" by literature, these latter offered as positive examples of "objective, functionalist" criticism. A writer who talks about "degrees of essentialness" should be more modest in criticizing Whitehead.

In addition, in spite of the dialectics and the appeals to Marx, Engels, Plekhanov and Lenin, Farrell's approach fails to be genuinely Marxist. He refutes the "leftist" critics purely in the abstract, as if they and their arguments were timeless and non-historical. Not once does he recognize that these writers are part of a social movement, influenced by specific time and place and circumstance. He does not relate them to the crisis and the depression. He does not even mention that they are all members or sympathizers of the Communist Party, and that their critical vagaries are merely variations on a theme rigidly set up by the theoreticians of the Comintern. Consequently, he does too much honor to their formal arguments as such — which are uniformly trivial — and provides us with no key to the *historical* movement of which they are a part. For this reason, Farrell does less than he should: his attack is mostly against the straw man of the "third period," against the leftist sectarianism which has by now been left far behind; and no weapons are provided against the new sweetness and light of the People's Front approach in criticism—an approach equally though very differently false and sterile.

However, to point out these things is

perhaps to object that Farrell did not write another book rather than the one he has written. And this is scarcely fair. He himself says in his "Foreword," "I aim principally to open a critical discussion. . . ." We cannot, then, demand that he should also complete it.

JAMES BURNHAM.

A WORD ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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